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# SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARIES

UNIVERSITY  
OF MICHIGAN

DEC 16 1955

PERIODICAL  
READING ROOM

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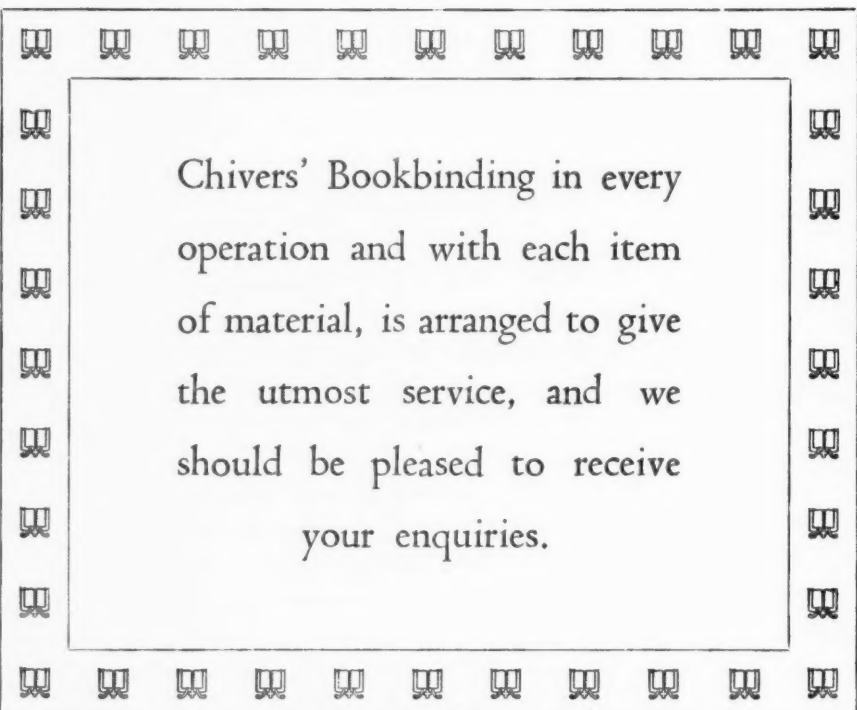
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# SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARIES

*The Official Organ of the South African Library Association*

Volume 23

October 1955

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## EDITORIAL

### BAD BOOKS AND GOOD READERS

IN A RECENT Annual Report the City Librarian of Johannesburg has drawn attention to a curious paradox. At a time when much concern is being expressed in some influential circles at the quality of reading matter available to and read by South African children, he finds it hard to understand (he says) 'the repeated statements by responsible people about the general decline of reading among the children and about the poor quality of reading matter available to them. In Johannesburg last year 336,451 carefully selected books were borrowed from the City's libraries by 19,368 European children registered as borrowers, and it is estimated that an equal number were borrowed from the schools.' A survey of other public library services in the country would amply confirm Mr. Kennedy's point. Thus in the newly-developing and still expanding City Library Service in Cape Town, 6,257 children registered as borrowers in 1954 and read 170,980 children's books, and the tale could be repeated in many other centres. It is in fact true to say that never before in the history of South Africa have such opportunities been both offered and taken in the field of children's reading.

When to the children's library services in all Provinces are added the expanding organized school library services – highly developed in Transvaal, increasingly so elsewhere, it is clear that the cumulative effect of these efforts has not yet been fully appreciated either by the general public, or by those most vociferous in condemning the present state of affairs. For this the librarians are perhaps themselves partly to blame for not making their achievements better known. As for the children who use these services – those in particular who are finding a new world opening through books – they are themselves witnesses, although perhaps not yet vocal ones, to the effectiveness of well-chosen and attractive books as an educational medium.

Yet the nagging problem remains: to what extent does all this 'good' reading offset the baleful influence of the 'comic' – at its lowest a form of sub-literature for the near-illiterate, at its best a form of visual education making no particular demands on judgment or intelligence? In this number of *South African Libraries* a colleague comments on this question, quoting from the experience of Frederic Wertham, author of *Seduction of the innocent*, a book which some authorities well qualified to speak have described as overstating a good case. That some men are powerfully influenced by works of imagination read in childhood, is undeniable. In his sensitive autobiographical work *Over the bridge* the poet Richard Church has recently described the impact of early reading, discovered

appropriately enough in the local public library, on a mind ready for awakening; and there are many similar, if less eloquent accounts. But to what extent bad actions are due to bad literature is a subject on which even experts beg to differ. Perhaps the most that can be said is that bad literature thrives most lustily on ground prepared by bad home influences, and that the root of the matter is not touched until the damaged personality is set right by means beyond the librarian's reach or control.

However that may be, the librarian must

surely persist in sowing good seed on whatever ground presents itself. His functions are both positive and therapeutic. But what is lacking at present perhaps, is a realisation by the public that concerns itself in these matters, of the extent to which this positive work is actually being carried out. These considerations are at present much in the public eye; and it is for the librarians, who are apt to take their activities too much for granted, to bring home to the public their beliefs and achievements in this field.

#### ARCHIVES IN A NEW ERA

**Central African Archives.** Archives in a new era: a report by the Chief Archivist, 1949 to 1954. Salisbury, 1954. viii, 81 p.

The aims and methods of archivists differ in important respects from those of librarians, but there is sufficient in common between them to make a survey of a growing archival organization, such as the one under review, of unusual interest and value to the practising librarian. Moreover, this is not a mere record of work achieved; it is an attempt, and a successful one, to describe and justify some of the methods that have been evolved to deal with a special set of problems. As an introduction to practical archival issues in a Southern African setting, it could hardly be bettered.

During its brief twenty years' existence the Central African Archives has of course built up for itself a reputation for good and imaginative administration, proving itself not merely a conserving element but a positive force in the life and education of a young community. The record for the quinquennium 1949 to 1954 bears this out in a number of respects. Apart from outstanding acquisitions such as the large collection of Livingstone papers named for Col. Livingstone Bruce (the explorer's grandson), and a number of smaller but important collections of manuscripts, the Chief Archivist can record the continued expansion of the research library (now comprising more than 32,000 items, including many rarities), the publication of further volumes in the *Oppenheimer series*, successful spadework for the launching of the

*Historical documents of East and Central Africa*, based on pioneer searching of archival sources in Portugal, Italy, France and Great Britain; and the organization of one exhibition on a grand scale (the Central African Rhodes Centenary Exhibition at Bulawayo in 1953) and several on a smaller scale, including one at the Van Riebeeck Festival Fair in Cape Town in 1952. Apart from all these activities, the C.A.A. has been able to render important services to the new Federal Government in the reorganization of its current records, and to several neighbouring administrations as well.

All this is sufficient cause for congratulation. For the librarian, however, there is material of special interest in the sections dealing with the setting-up of records management centres in each of the three territories within the Federation, of which the first, at Cranborne, three miles outside Salisbury, is already in operation. The chief function of these centres is to act as a filter, dealing exclusively with the storage and management of semi-current records. These records, which were formerly transferred sporadically from the departments concerned to the central Archives, are now to be taken over by the new centres as soon as they cease to be of daily use. There they are cleaned, mended (if necessary), weeded, arranged, boxed and shelved; destruction schedules are compiled, and the records, after an appropriate period, are either destroyed or transferred to the Archives proper for final treatment, permanent retention, and public use. The complicated impedimenta of a modern bureaucratic state make some such



machinery highly desirable, and here in the Central African Federation the opportunity has been taken to deal with the problem at its source.

In his preface Mr. V. W. Hiller, the Chief Archivist, points out that this is the third and last report of the Archives as a Southern

Rhodesian agency, and rightly claims that this is one of the few institutions in the Federation aiming at the creation of a cultural heritage. In common with previous reports, this one is clearly written and extremely easy on the eye, and constitutes an enviable record of achievement.

### UNIVERSITY LIBRARY PROGRESS

**University of Cape Town Libraries.** As usual, the annual report from the U.C.T. Libraries for 1954 contains a separate and very full statistical record. The chief event of the year was the opening of the new Medical Library<sup>1</sup>; apart from this, steady progress in all departments is reported, the stock increasing by 8,532 volumes to a total (books, bound volumes of periodicals, government publications and theses) of 274,683 items. The number of serial titles received was 4,831. 72 per cent of the student body were registered as library borrowers, and the services of the University libraries were also used increasingly by "outside" enquirers. There has been a notable increase in the amount of reference work done at all branches; the shelving of special collections in a separate new stackroom led to a striking increase in the use of that material. The Photographic Service records an active year; apart from running off the library's cataloguing cards on an offset duplicator, the department has undertaken several large-scale microfilming jobs, including the filming of the Archives of the Methodist Church in South Africa, and a considerable portion of the General Smuts Archives. This department also initiated the Willem Hiddingh reprint series, in collaboration with the South African Library. A problem only too common to other University libraries has been to reconcile the principle of open access with

the growing stocks of book material of intrinsic and reference value; nevertheless a thorough enquiry has shown that the losses, taken as a whole, are not unduly high. The Report of the **University of Witwatersrand Library** for 1954 records an increase in book funds (the library vote, exclusive of salaries and wages, rising from £11,400 to £14,200) and in staff. The principle of incorporating a Divisional Library (under the full control of the University Librarian) in the proposed Architecture and Fine Arts Building, was accepted towards the end of the period under review. Additions to stock amounted to 5,588, the total estimated stock, including pamphlets, being 251,976 at the end of 1954. The number of serial publications currently received was 3,705. The number of borrowers registered amounted to approx. 45 per cent of the student body, and extra accommodation both for readers and for storage generally has become an urgent necessity. Notable features of the Library's acquisitions during the year were the building up of bookstocks for the *Ernest Oppenheimer Institute of Portuguese Studies*, and the setting aside of an amount of £500 for the purchase of microfilms of otherwise unobtainable documents required for research purposes. We have also received a copy of the Annual Report of the **University College of Fort Hare** for 1954. This records the regrading of the post of Librarian to that of Senior Lecturer, an increase in the number of books issued to students, to 26,955 and the growth of the bookstock to a total of 26,890. The number of student borrowers was 374.

<sup>1</sup> Immelman, R. F. M. The new Medical Library at the University of Cape Town (*S.A.L.*, 21 (3), 73-76, January, 1954).

## THE CITY LIBRARY SERVICE, CAPE TOWN

by

B. G. HOOD

*City Librarian, Cape Town*

Membership (15.8.55) . . . . .	43,940
Circulation (1954) . . . . .	1,148,246
Expenditure (1954) . . . . .	£66,791
Branch Libraries (Central, Wynberg, Sea Point, Claremont, Rondebosch, Observatory, Woodstock, Muizenberg, Hymar Liberman <sup>1</sup> ) . . . . .	9
Sub-Branches (Camps Bay, Mowbray, Maitland, Good Hope Village, Kewtown <sup>1</sup> , Athlone <sup>1</sup> , Plumstead, Janet Bourhill <sup>1</sup> , Kensington <sup>1</sup> , Gleemoor <sup>1</sup> , Lansdowne <sup>1</sup> , Bloemhof <sup>1</sup> , Kalk Bay, Langa <sup>1</sup> , Windermere <sup>1</sup> , Green Point) . . . . .	16
Deposits (Ackermans <sup>1</sup> , Service Products <sup>1</sup> ) . . . . .	2
Hospital Service Points (Eaton Convalescent, Groote Schuur, Mowbray Maternity, Rondebosch, Somerset General, Victoria, Woodstock) . . . . .	7
Travelling Libraries ("Mobile", "Reisende") . . . . .	2
	<hr/> 36
Qualified Staff . . . . .	19
Other Staff . . . . .	83
	<hr/> 102

### TOWARDS A FREE LIBRARY SERVICE

A MAJOR STEP in the development of a municipal free library service in Cape Town was the adoption by the Cape Town City Council in 1945 of the report of the City Library Commission, which showed the inadequacies of service given by the local independent subscription library committees as compared with municipal free libraries operating elsewhere, and outlined a detailed plan for the development of free libraries in five yearly stages.

#### *Cape Libraries Extension Association*

This organization, consisting of the representatives of various institutions, was the pioneer of free library service in Cape Town and was started in 1942 with the object of providing free library service for the underprivileged of Cape Town. Using the South African Library as its headquarters, and depend-

ing mainly on funds from the City Council, the Association extended its activities until, in 1952, it was operating free libraries at Athlone, Bloemhof, Gleemoor, Jamestown, Kensington, Langa and Lansdowne, all of which, with the exception of Lansdowne, are in or near Council sub-economic housing schemes. There were 10,644 books, a membership of 3,916, and a staff of two qualified assistants and thirteen part-time assistants and cleaners. The Association was handicapped by the nature of its library premises, for the libraries at Kensington and Lansdowne were merely locked cases of books housed in school-rooms, Jamestown was a room in a Council Estate office, Langa was the tiny back room of a sub-economic house, Gleemoor a room in a dilapidated community centre, and Bloemhof locked cases in a room in the community centre of a block of flats for Coloured workers. Athlone was the only branch which looked anything like a library, and this was a three roomed house in a sub-economic housing unit

<sup>1</sup> See Cape Libraries Extension Association below.

where constant attempts were being made to have it used for its original purpose.

The Supervisor of the Association looked after the purchase of books and the technical processes, and regularly visited the libraries in a small panel van. As far as buying policy was concerned, it appears from the stock of the Association that an attempt was made to reach people who had never used books before. Only two of the libraries had any non-fiction, there were no reference books, and the stock was mainly a monotonous pattern of light fiction, detectives, westerns and love stories. Two of the libraries had no Afrikaans books.

### *Hospital Library Service*

Arising out of the Commission's report, the City Council, in 1945, set up a small organization to provide free books and magazines for hospital patients, and this was expanded over the years to reach seven hospitals in the municipal area.

There is a large library room with 4,700 books at the City's largest hospital, Groote Schuur (800 beds), and cupboard shelving at the other depots, while the two assistants visit each hospital in turn in suitable ward visiting times. Books are taken round in trolleys and although issue statistics are kept, there is no count of the number of borrowers. A large number of books are received every year from grateful patients and well-wishers, and many of these books are, in turn, handed over to other institutions, such as fever hospitals, where direct service is not practicable. As far as possible, books for the hospitals are provided in washable acetate covers which are also widely used in the other branches of the Service.

### *Cape Provincial Library Ordinance*

In 1951, the Council adopted the Cape Provincial Library Ordinance of 1949 which provided for the payment of a 50 per cent subsidy to an "urban library area" ("any municipal area having a European population of more than 15,000 or a combined... population of more than fifty thousand").

In the further terms of this Ordinance, the Council was limited to a total library expenditure of not more than two per cent of the revenue collected from property rates

in the immediately preceding calendar year. In the case of Cape Town, library expenditure was limited to an upper level of about £40,000, of which the Administrator could subsidise to a minimum of £20,000, or to any maximum he might determine. Separate facilities for different races were to be provided by the municipality.

A new Ordinance, promulgated in 1955, removed the upper limit on the Council's expenditure and gave the Administrator authority to subsidize to whatever extent he might determine, subject to the amount of subsidy being not less in any future year than the amount paid for 1955.

In 1952, a Libraries Development Officer took up his appointment and in the first instance undertook a tour of the public and provincial libraries of the Union. On his return he submitted reports, duly adopted, recommending:

- (a) The establishment of a Head Office.
- (b) The appointment of qualified staff.
- (c) The incorporation of the Hospital and Extension services as the nucleus of the City's free library organization.
- (d) The offer of incorporation to the suburban libraries, the Hyman Liberman Institute Library and the Afrikaanse Nederlandse Boekery en Leeskamer.
- (e) The reorganization of municipal reference services.
- (f) The establishment of a central lending library in the South African Library building.
- (g) The provision of the necessary funds for bookbuying and other expansion.

### *Head Office*

The Headquarters of the Service are on the 3rd floor of Hamilton House, 30 Chiappini Street, a former clothing factory with an area of 10,000 square feet. In this office, the purchase and accessioning, classification, cataloguing and processing of all books is carried out, together with the issue of borrowers' cards, the provision of stationery and other supplies, rejection of stock and rebinding. Request, inter-loan and overdue procedures are also based on this office. The volume of work has grown so much that a further floor of similar size is under consideration for 1955.

*Administration*

The City's libraries fall under the control of the General Purposes Committee of the Council, and are administered as a branch of the Town Clerk's Department in the same manner as the Municipal Orchestra and the Traffic, Fire, Markets, and Abattoirs branches. The head of the branch is the City Librarian, and his senior officers are an Administrative Assistant, Chief Branch Librarian, Hospital Librarian, Children's Librarian and Chief Cataloguer respectively.

*Incorporation of existing libraries*

The problems facing a librarian charged with the task of establishing a free library service in Cape Town are no more complicated than in any other part of the Union or of the world. The arguments for and against free library service remain the same and although the most effective argument is by a demonstration project, this was not possible in Cape Town.

The major step in the establishment of the City Library Service was the conversion of 11 subscription libraries, which had been in operation for many years, to free library service. In the first place, meetings with the various committees of the libraries were held, and this was followed by a questionnaire to all concerned. At the end of 1952, the Council was able to offer these libraries the option of joining a unified Council service; with one exception the libraries agreed, and after an interim period of a year, opened as free municipal libraries in January 1954. Local committees were very jealous of their rights and privileges, and it was mainly the thought that Provincial and Council subsidies, which amounted to almost half of their incomes, might be withdrawn, and that the Council might independently open free libraries in the various areas, that finally swayed the balance. In the interim year, the staff of the City Library Service designed suitable routines, classified stock, typed book cards for about 150,000 books, spine-lettered them and pasted in due slips, provided books on permanent loan, and trained suburban staff. The meetings of the committees, usually monthly, were always attended by a senior staff member of the City Library Service. It is worth noting that at only three of the suburban libraries

did the local librarian attend the committee meetings, and at two of these their attendance was confined to the duties of minute-taking secretary. The entire staff of the suburban libraries, with the exception of two who retired through ill-health, were transferred to the Council's staff at better salaries, and leave and sick leave provisions, than they had enjoyed before. Those under 45 years of age joined the Council's pension scheme, a boon which existed in none of the libraries. None of the committees employed qualified librarians at the time of transfer.

The assets of the libraries were transferred to the Council on incorporation, and local committees were permitted to continue in a new advisory and "friends of the library" manner if they so desired. The Wynberg Library Association Committee has been active in the organization of meetings of a cultural nature in the library, but only two other committees were formed. The main concern of the former committees was, of course, book selection and once this task fell away they lost interest.

The stock of the suburban libraries at the point of incorporation was collectively and individually deplorable in quality and condition, and the Service has been severely handicapped in its operations by the need for replacing old and battered stock and the provision of new books for the vastly increased number of borrowers. One of the largest suburban libraries had mended no books for about 20 years. As they disintegrated they were removed, but the majority sat on the shelves with all the pages loose. From this library about 9,000 books in this condition were removed, and from the same library it is recorded that during one period of financial difficulty, the Africana was sold off to members at 6d. per book. Another library carried on its activities from the proceeds of cake sales and dances, the task of organizing both falling, of course, to the librarian. One of the librarians made art jewellery which she sold at the desk to augment her salary. And so on.

The only library remaining outside the service is the Afrikaanse-Nederlandse Boekery en Leeskamer. Despite a clause in the Provincial Library Ordinance that on the declaration of an urban library area, no financial assistance shall be given to other libraries in the area,





A corner of the Kalk Bay Library, showing a topical display

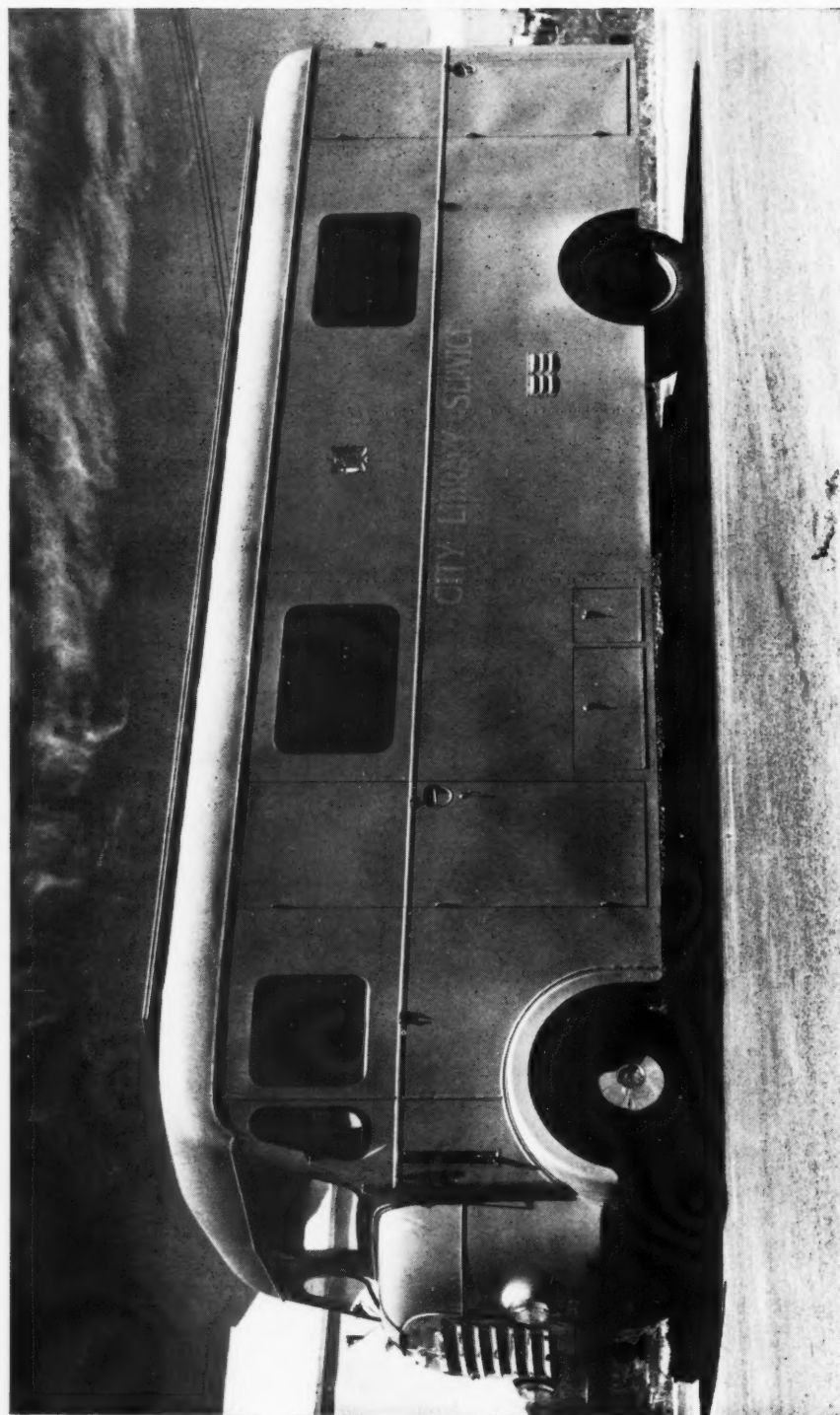


*Cape Times*

CITY LIBRARY SERVICE, CAPE TOWN

(Below) Children queue at the busy Athlone Library, in the new Community Centre of a Council Housing Scheme





CITY LIBRARY SERVICE, CAPE TOWN

"Reisende", built on a five-ton Bedford chassis, has a double roof to alleviate summer heat

*Paramount Studios, Parow*

the Leeskamer still depends on a Provincial grant as its main source of revenue. It is really the club library of the Afrikaans-Nederlands Verbond and one which would have had little justification for Provincial subsidy if an adequate library service had existed in Cape Town in the past.

The problems of maintenance of many decrepit buildings proves an expensive one and in 1954 this amounted to £1,096. Wherever possible, display panels of insulating masonite have been erected and brought into use. Displays circulate among libraries, including a series of "Authors of the Month". Notices about reserves, requests and new books are standardized and displayed in the various branches with suitable "cut outs". A large quantity of paint has been used in the attempt to rid the branches of their almost uniformly drab and uninviting appearance, and members of the staff have frequently taken part in the painting operations. Most of the maintenance and renovation work is done by the City Engineer and City Electrical Engineer, but the library staff now includes a handyman who has more than a full time job on dealing with minor repairs of this nature.

#### *Municipal Reference Library*

This is currently housed in a room in the City Hall which is let to various organizations and used for civic cocktail parties, and as the problem of accommodation in municipal buildings is desperate, the reorganization of this library has been deferred. However, the library works in close touch with the Service, and, since the beginning of 1955, all Council departments have done all their bookbuying through the Head Office and their books are recorded in the City Library Service master catalogue. Back numbers of technical periodicals from all departments are also stored for reference.

#### *Central Branch*

In the Organizer's first report to the Council, the importance of combining central free library facilities with the existing national South African Library was stressed, but the best arrangement that could be made, after lengthy negotiations between the Council and the Trustees of the South African Library, was the leasing of the lending room of that

library for a period of five years at a rental of £3,200. The Council also purchased 32,500 lending volumes from the Trustees for £1,775. The area leased is inadequate to give effective central service, and much congestion has occurred. The maximum number of volumes which can be made available is only 40,000 – again insufficient. This state of affairs should be alleviated with the opening of the proposed Long Street branch, but the permanent solution lies in the Council's proposed civic centre on Roggebaai.

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE SERVICE

#### *New Libraries opened*

Apart from the suburban libraries mentioned above, the following libraries have been opened under Council control:

#### *Non-European Travelling Library ("Mobile")* (17th December, 1953)

This library tours the entire length of the municipal area with 17 different stopping places in the course of a week. The current membership is 1,666 and the monthly issues are over 3,000.

Both travelling libraries in service were built locally on Chevrolet and Bedford chassis. They have a capacity of 1,400 – 1,500 books and also carry a full range of magazines. Shelving is internal, made of Philippine mahogany, and although "Mobile" is additionally fitted for main electricity supply, both libraries carry double 12 volt batteries for lighting and these are charged on alternate nights with a trickle charger. "Mobile" has a driver-librarian while "Reisende" has a crew of two, a driver and a librarian. The volume of work on "Mobile" requires the provision of extra staff for peak periods.

#### *Windermere (Kensington Students' Clinic)* (15th June, 1953)

Situated in a modern clinic in one of the worst slum areas of the City, Windermere consists of the familiar locked case of books in cramped premises with no reading facilities, in a suburb where few of the houses have electric light.

#### *Ackerman's Factory* (17th June 1953)

The first factory deposit library in the Service for which the factory authorities provide

a separate room and the librarian. The library is open at lunch hours only, but otherwise functions in the same manner as any other library.

*Janet Bourhill Institute* (10th January 1954)

Another locked case library in a flourishing community centre in Claremont, whose use has prompted the centre's committee to give priority to the building of a separate library in the grounds.

*Service Products* (14th September 1954)

A factory library on the lines of Ackerman's (above).

*"Reisende"* (15th December 1954)

This name was given to a second mobile library which is currently serving areas adjacent to the centre of the city in order to relieve the pressure on the Central Branch, in which capacity it has been most successful. Membership is currently 1,441 and is still growing, while the monthly issue is over 4,500. The vehicle is in service for 5 days of the week and for only 4 hours each day, including travelling time.

*Plumstead Branch* (18th April 1955)

The first suburban library to be opened in rented shop premises, and the first static library in which some attempt could be made to provide modern library décor in its narrow confines. It has already outgrown its premises.

*Kalk Bay* (21st April 1955)

A large municipal hall was converted for library purposes, and, with modern furnishings and the use of a lot of paint, it shows that something can be done with a drab building.

*Green Point* (1st August 1955)

Shop premises on the main road have been converted from a subscription library, with little change except the removal of some superfluous fittings and the use of some paint.

*Further new libraries scheduled for 1955*

Shop premises have been obtained in Kloof Street for the opening of a new branch in that area, predominantly for children, and the first floor of a new building on the corner of Long and Longmarket Streets in the central city area should be available about the beginning of December for an additional central branch

specializing in applied science, music and art. Specifications have been drawn up for a further mobile library, a new library in the Cape Malay community centre in Schotse Kloof awaits its furniture, and a further suburban unit is projected for Vredehoek.

*Suburban buildings*

Plans are well advanced and authority has been granted for the building of new suburban branches at Claremont and Wynberg, where the present libraries are housed in leasehold premises. The projected Wynberg Library, with an area of about 5,000 square feet, has priority in the civic centre scheme on the Maynardville estate, and the design includes a record-playing room and an adult section which can be easily converted for film screenings or meetings. Other new buildings are under consideration in the Athlone, Diep River and Langa areas.

SOME ASPECTS OF THE SERVICE

*Afrikaans books*

It may be surprising to many to learn that on transfer to the Service, at least five of the suburban libraries had no Afrikaans books apart from dictionaries, and even these were lacking in some libraries. This defect was quickly remedied and there has been a considerable increase in the number of Afrikaans books read. The percentage of Afrikaans books (adult and junior) in stock in 1954 was 5 per cent and the issues were 3.9 per cent of the total.

*Binding*

Two of the suburban libraries have full-time bookmending assistants, and although a large amount of binding was done for the Service in 1953 and 1954, the problem of mending became progressively more acute. A bookmender was appointed at the Head Office in 1955, and most of the basic equipment is on order. The service was possibly the first in South Africa to instal a perfect binding machine, an Ehlerman Lumbeck Hand-operated Process Binder. This is proving most effective, particularly for library fiction, and substantially cuts costs. The bookmender

has visited most of the branches repairing books and instructing staff in repair methods.

### *Audio-visual*

In a library organization such as this, starved for books for many years, the purchase of books should be given full priority when policy is decided. When this basic need has been met or rather held as far as possible, then some thought can be given to other aids such as films and records which can supplement the library's task of providing information.

The services of the Council's Traffic Branch projector and operators have always been available, but the rapidly expanding use of films in the libraries has made a library-owned projector indispensable and this is being bought. Other film equipment, such as viewer and a splicer, is already in stock.

To complement the stock of sheet music, and against the day when gramophone records will be available on loan, the Service began buying long-playing records in 1954 and now has a representative stock of 735 records. These are used in conjunction with children's library activities, (suburban) library association meetings, and also in a series of gramophone recitals which is currently being held in three of the Council's libraries.

A small stock of filmstrips is also held, but no attempt has been made to build up a collection of documentary films in view of their cost, the work of other agencies such as the Educational Film Library, and many other film libraries in Cape Town, and the intention of the Provincial Library Service to specialize in film library service for adults.

In 1954, the Service acquired a small collection of framed art prints as the nucleus of a collection which would be available on loan from the libraries, and this collection will be greatly extended in 1955. At present most of the prints are being used for decoration of libraries.

### *Books for children*

The Service has been fortunate in having a fully qualified professional librarian who has specialized in children's work. In the survey of subscription libraries mentioned above, no sections were in worse shape than those for the children. The policy of the committees was to spend most of the available money on adult

books because adult subscriptions were a main source of revenue. One of the largest suburban libraries had bought no children's books for over three years and its last purchases had been a few annuals of the *Playbox* and *Chums* type which had been obtained second-hand and out of date from child members. The same library had a reading table for children which was covered with comics taken from local papers. The library possessed a downstairs children's room in a municipal hall, and it is not surprising that in 1952 officials from the City Treasury conducted an investigation, and, having established the fact that few children ever used the library, took over the children's room and turned it into a cash office.

Weeding the children's stock was a necessary but easy task; in all but two of the libraries, the entire junior stock could have been discarded, and although weeding was in all cases drastic, it had to be protracted in order to replace the old books which were removed and to meet the demand from a rapidly expanding number of borrowers.

In 1953, the first story-hours were held in most of the libraries. They received a most enthusiastic response from the children, and this programme was expanded in 1954, and even further in 1955, when films, recordings and glove puppet shows were introduced as an ancillary to the large range of books which was displayed. The Children's Librarian holds a weekly story-hour for the child patients of the Groote Schuur Hospital, and has also been active in speaking to Parent-Teacher and similar groups, and addressing school children about the best in children's reading and the care of books. It is generally considered that an audience of from twenty-five to forty is ideal for a children's story-hour, but in many cases the numbers have gone over 100, and on one occasion there were 400 children inside the library and another 100 clamouring round the door. Numerous selected lists of children's reading have been prepared and distributed in connection with these activities.

Children's books are graded and spine-lettered and shelved accordingly into:

- (1) First books and picture books (roughly eight years old and under).
- (2) Books for young readers (up to ten years).
- (3) Older boys and girls (over ten years).



### *Transport*

The administration of the Service with its many widely scattered branches, a regular inter-movement of books, and the supply of other materials from Headquarters, calls for effective transport. At present the Service has two panel vans, and four of the staff own cars purchased through a Council scheme for which they receive transport allowances while carrying out Council work. Each extension service library is visited by the Supervisor at least once a fortnight for the collection of cash and delivery of supplies, while more frequent trips are made to the larger branches. One of the panel vans has external shelving and is used as a relief if the mobile libraries have to be taken off the road for servicing or repair. It has been found that the method of supplying staff members with their own cars purchased through the Council's scheme and paying them transport allowances is more effective and economical than having the vans at the beck and call of all staff members and the responsibility of none. There are two full-time drivers on the staff establishment.

### TECHNICAL FACETS

#### *Bookbuying*

The field of bookbuying is divided as follows :

English standard fiction and non-fiction.  
Juvenile books.  
Afrikaans adult books.  
Music and Fine Arts.

These groups are all ordered by suitably qualified officers while English light fiction is bought by individual branch librarians against a fixed annual allocation.

Borrower participation in bookbuying is extensive through the requests and suggestions which they hand in in large numbers at the various libraries. Several hundred requests are received weekly and these are treated as follows :

- (1) Supplied out of stock if available in the small Headquarters stock.
- (2) Bought for the library concerned or recalled from another library.

- (3) If relatively old, placed on a checklist, circulated to all libraries of the Service, and if this is unavailing, bought for the Service if the book is considered to have some permanent value.
- (4) Borrowed from other Cape Town libraries or if not obtainable, applied for on inter-library loan. Borrowers are encouraged to submit subject requests which often entail a considerable amount of reference work, and the subsequent results enrich the book stock of the Service.

Suggestions are accepted for works which are not obtainable on request from Headquarters, notably light fiction, and in most cases it is found that these books are already on order.

#### *Order system and book stock*

Bookbuying lists, periodicals, and publisher's catalogues are circulated round the bookbuying staff and from these the assistant in charge of the order section types order cards, which are checked against holdings and books on order, and then compiled into an order which is placed with one of the local booksellers. When a book arrives the order card is placed therein and date of supply and price noted thereon. This card subsequently becomes the shelf list stock card and main author card for the Head Office catalogue. Full catalogues are kept at Head Office and in the Central Branch for the books which have gone through the cataloguing section of the Service. These amount to about 130,000 books but the remainder of the books in the branches, approximately the same number, remain uncatalogued. Branch catalogues are not maintained but all books are processed with three book cards, one of which remains at Head Office filed under the library concerned as a finding list, a second card is filed at the branch as a record of the books which the branch has received and the third, an issuing card.

New additions, excluding light fiction, are published in an accessions list which is displayed prominently in all branches. Critical annotations are provided on these lists as staff time permits.

The book stock of the Service is now very comprehensive and among subjects which



are prominently represented are Graphic Arts, Home Science, Interior Decoration, Sport, Music and Sheet Music. Among recent acquisitions to the music collection are sets of the Edwards Music reprint series of the complete works of Bach and Brahms. A surprising collection of Africana has been rescued from the cupboards and back rooms of some of the suburban libraries.

#### *Conditions of membership*

Free membership is available to residents of the Cape Town municipal area or the wives or husbands of ratepayers or their children, or persons under the age of 21 who attend educational establishments in Cape Town, e.g. the University of Cape Town School of Librarianship. Borrowers up to the age of 15 are permitted to take out two books or magazines at a time from the junior sections of the libraries, and those from 15 to 21 two from the adult sections, although the section from which junior members take their books is left to the discretion of the individual librarians. Adult members can take out two free books or magazines at a time and, if they so desire, up to three extra documents at 3d. each. The Library Regulation (No. 1957 of 1954) states that no borrower may have in his possession more than five documents at any time, but no effort is made to enforce this rule except in the case of defaulters when it affords an additional ground for prosecution.

Transients or those who live outside the area are also entitled to membership and pay a small subscription as well as 3d. for each book or magazine which they borrow. Registration for all borrowers runs in three-yearly cycles and for a full three-yearly period the 'outside' borrower pays 6s. subscription, for two years he pays 4s. 6d., and for the final year, 3s. Adult outside borrowers may take out up to five books at a time and juniors may take two books. In actual practice, there are few 'outside' junior borrowers as most of the children who live on the borders qualify for free membership through attending schools inside the area, or their books are drawn on their parents' cards.

#### *Issue methods*

The issue system is a mixed one, consisting of both Brown and Newark methods. Free

adult members receive two pocket type cards and an identity card. Free junior members receive two pocket type cards, while 'outside' adult members receive an identity card which is also a receipt for their subscription and thus clerical work is obviated. Book cards for books and magazines are filed in the pocket type cards in the issue, but where books are issued against identity cards, the member's number and first three letters of his surname are written on the book card. Lost members' cards are replaced after a month's delay at a charge of 6d. each, while the libraries will in no circumstances store cards for members. All applications for membership are dealt with centrally, the bona fides of applicants are checked against membership rolls and the voters' roll where necessary and, of course, against the defaulters' list. Members' cards are sent out by post, but applicants are allowed to take out one free book at a time pending the receipt of their cards. All members are requested to advise changes of address or resignation.

#### *Overdues procedure*

Fourteen days after the book is due to be returned, a first notice card is despatched to the member and this is followed after another fortnight by a registered letter which, in the case of borrowers under 21, is sent to both the borrower and the nominator. A week later the borrower is debarred from using any of the libraries, and a list is circulated to all librarians to this effect. After another week, a telephone call is made from Head Office to any member who has a telephone connection at home or work. If this is unavailing, the matter is then handed to the City Treasurer's collectors who visit rate, electric light or water defaulters. Should the collectors be unsuccessful, the matter is returned to the City Librarian, who decides whether or not it is to be placed in the hands of the public prosecutor. Overdue charges are 1d. per day, less Sundays and days on which the libraries are closed, and include the cost of postage on any notices or registered letters.

#### *Period of loan*

The normal period of loan is fourteen days, but books may be renewed if no other borrowers require them. If the book was a free issue,

here is no charge for renewal. Members going on holiday may obtain a special "Holiday Extension" which gives a loan period of six weeks.

#### CO-OPERATION

The staff of the suburban libraries quickly adapted themselves to the new routines and have done much to promote good relations with the borrowing public. The Head Office

staff have tackled the many problems which have faced the Service in its "teething" period, with much ability and professional enthusiasm.

The co-operation received from all departments of the City Council has been most helpful and encouraging and the great interest taken in the development of the Service by its senior officer, the Town Clerk (Mr. M. B. Williams), has been one of the most important factors in promoting the large-scale development which has taken place since 1952.

#### BOOK REVIEW

**Lamb, J. P.** *Commercial and technical libraries ... with a preface by Sir Walter Benton Jones.* London George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., and The Library Association, (1955). (The Library Association series of library manuals, X.) 315p. plates. 21s.

This book by the City Librarian of Sheffield is a joy to jaded librarians, weary of the oceans of verbiage which these days engulf so many of our professional publications. Mr. Lamb has so much experience of running an excellent public library with an excellent science and commerce department that he does not need any smoke screen of pretentious theory to hide a paucity of sound and practical knowledge. His flashes of wry humour also add to our reading pleasure (e.g. his description of Dewey as "a scheme distinguished by a useful vagueness of outlook".)

As the author says in his Foreword: "this work deals only with British public commercial and technical libraries", but within these limits it is very thorough. The volume begins with a history of commercial and technical libraries in Britain and goes on to deal with general principles, plan and furniture, staff, book stock, patents and trademarks, organization and administration, expenditure, activities and "the future". The information and advice given under all these headings inspires confidence.

One of the most heartening things for any librarian to read about in the historical section is the far-sightedness of the early leaders of the Library Association in England, particularly Mr. E. A. Savage of Edinburgh. The wide vision they had of the need for the provision of technical and commercial libraries as long ago as World War I, confirms the belief that it has always been librarians themselves who have contributed most to overall library planning and co-operation.

Mr. Lamb's book is so good that it seems ungracious to pick any small faults in it, but where one reviewer's experience is contrary to Mr. Lamb's,

it may be helpful to point this out. When on p. 209 he says: "the classified catalogue... though simple to make, is not so effective a guide to the library's contents as the dictionary", I could not disagree more. During many years of experience in information work, particularly technical information work, I have found the classified catalogue a precision instrument for finding such technical information; in the two years when I had to work with a dictionary catalogue I was forced to try to use the shelf register cards instead when I wanted to pin-point any source of information.

On page 284, where Mr. Lamb pays some attention to the organization of abstracting services, I feel that he does less than justice to the efforts of the Royal Society in this direction. Both by its 1948 Scientific Information Conference, where this whole question was exhaustively discussed, and by its continuing committees to give effect to some of the Conference's recommendations, it has at least deserved a mention in a book usually so gracious about other people's efforts to solve problems. The innumerable committees on scientific abstracting which have been called by UNESCO during the past few years might perhaps also have been mentioned.

When the investigation of the possible use of "electronic contrivances" is advocated on p. 286 the impression is conveyed (perhaps wrongly) that Mr. Lamb is unaware of the large amount of work that actually has been and is being done in this direction. The Rapid Selector mentioned by Mr. Ralph Shaw at the same 1948 Royal Society Scientific Conference is a case in point, and the investigations being carried on at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology are another.

These are, however, small blemishes, if blemishes they are, in one of the most practical, thorough and heartening pieces of work that have been issued in special library literature for a long time.

H. M.

## PAUL JOHANNES STEPHANUS RIBBINK, 1889-1955

PAUL JOHANNES STEPHANUS RIBBINK, formerly Librarian of Parliament, 1921-49, died at his residence in Cape Town on the 5th July, 1955, after a long illness. He was 66 years of age and is survived by his wife, two daughters and two sons, a third son having been killed on active service in the Second World War.

He was born on the 26th November, 1889, at Jeppe, Johannesburg. His parents hailed from Holland. His father, Mr. Gerrit Ribbink, at the personal request of President Kruger came out to the South African Republic in 1888 and was subsequently appointed Director of Telegraphs in Johannesburg. His mother, Madame Bal, was well-known as a singer, especially in Johannesburg and Pretoria, where she played a prominent part in musical circles.

His parents were close friends of President and Mrs. Kruger and were frequent visitors at the President's home. And so it came about that when Paul Ribbink was born he was named after Paul Kruger, his god-father.

Mr. Ribbink began his early education in Pretoria and continued it in Holland, Germany and France, where he studied for the Diplomatic Service.

At the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War he ran away from home and, armed with his father's rifle, attempted to board a troop train but was recognized by a friend of the family at the railway station and taken home in tears. In consequence of this escapade he was sent to school in Holland, and when President Kruger arrived in Europe young Paul was privileged to visit his god-father on three occasions - at Hilversum, at Amsterdam and again at Vevey-Montreux.

On completing his studies, Mr. Ribbink returned to the Transvaal and was appointed to the staff of the Treasury, but soon afterwards was transferred to the Department of Agriculture. From 1912 to 1921 he held the post of Librarian to the Department of Agriculture. He was directly responsible for inaugurating the system of loan of books on agricultural subjects to farmers throughout the Union of South Africa. When war broke out in 1914 he joined the Union Forces and served as a Commissioned Officer with Enslin's Horse.

In 1921 he was appointed Librarian of Parliament. Soon afterwards Mr. Ribbink

commenced the difficult and exacting task of reclassifying the entire library according to the Dewey Decimal scheme. With the assistance of one additional full-time classifier, whom he first had to school thoroughly, he undertook the colossal task, and 15 years later could report to his Committee that the work had been successfully completed. This, despite the fact that in the meantime considerable additional material had been acquired through the purchase of the Jardine Collection - an unclassified mass of some 15,000 publications.

During Mr. Ribbink's tenure of office as Librarian to Parliament the library's holdings increased from 120,000 items in 1921 to about 200,000 in 1948. These additions include the Mendelssohn Library, which had been acquired by Parliament prior to his appointment but which had not at that time been accessioned, and the Jardine Collection of Africana purchased by Parliament in 1927 on the initiative of Mr. Ribbink.

During the years Mr. Ribbink built up an excellent library for statesmen, especially representative of the social sciences, which include constitutional law, administration, commonwealth relations, foreign relations, law and parliamentary affairs. He was an accomplished linguist and equally at home in Afrikaans, English, Dutch, French and German. His extensive knowledge of foreign languages is reflected by the varied selection of foreign books on the library shelves. Mr. Ribbink was keenly interested in Africana, a subject of which he had considerable expert knowledge, and it is owing to his enthusiasm that Mendelssohn's priceless collection of Africana found a permanent home in the Library of Parliament.

He was officially responsible for the publication of the quarterly list of new books received in the Library of Parliament. This publication is a classified catalogue in which each item is annotated. In 1927, under his guidance, a bibliography was published on the relations between Europeans and Coloured Races; this was followed in 1931 by the *Gids tot die publikasies in en oor Afrikaans*, of which a second edition was issued in 1934. This guide was actually the first bibliography of any dimensions to be compiled on the subject; the earlier lists by Professor J. J. Smith and

Dr. Lydia van Niekerk were modest contributions and appeared as parts of other publications. In 1938 the first issue of the *Annual List of Africana* made its appearance, serving as a continuation of Mendelssohn's *South African Bibliography*, which was published in 1910.

Mr. Ribbink was also the author of several articles of which the following may be mentioned :

Libraries and the welfare of the people : a study of the potentialities of library service (*S. A. Journal of Industries*, Sept., 1925).

The Mendelssohn library (*S.A. Nation*, 24th Jan. 1925).

Die ontwikkeling van skrif en boeke (*Huisgenoot*, 30th Dec. 1932).

Rural libraries in South Africa. A paper read at the Cape Branch of the S.A. Library Association, Cape Town, on the 23rd Feb. 1939.

Mr. Ribbink's activities were not limited to his special sphere of work in the Library of Parliament. In 1925 he was appointed Chairman of an Inter-Departmental Committee appointed to inquire into the book-buying methods of the South African Railways and Harbours Administration, and to recommend the adoption of a procedure which would promote economy and expedition. The Committee reported in 1926 and the implementation of its recommendations led to a considerable saving of Government funds and to a complete re-organization of the system.

At the request of the Administrator of South West Africa, Mr. Ribbink went to Windhoek in 1928 to organize the library of the South West Administration - a library containing several thousand books on scientific and technical subjects in English, German and French.

Mr. Ribbink was a member of the Cape Provincial Library Advisory Committee and partly on his initiative the Society for Book Distribution was established. When this society was eventually absorbed by the Cape Provincial Service Mr. Ribbink served as a member of the Cape Provincial Library Board from its inception in 1949 until it was superseded by a new Board under Cape Ordinance No. 4 of 1955.

Mr. Ribbink played a prominent part in the formation of the Cape Branch of the South African Library Association, of which he was elected the first Chairman on the 23rd February, 1939. For a number of years he was also Chairman of the Afrikaans-Nederlandse Openbare Biblioteek, Cape Town.

Towards the end of his tenure of office his energies were directed towards promoting the fire-proofing of his library and paving the way for the passage of the Copyright Amendment Act, which was to add the name of the Library of Parliament to South Africa's list of copyright libraries. But his services to Parliament were drawing to a close, and when he retired on the 25th November, 1949, neither of these projects had been fully carried out. He did, however, live to see their completion a year or two later.

To a man of such energy there could be no complete severance from active work, and so during the first few years of his retirement he closely associated himself with a large private library as an adviser and buyer of Africana.

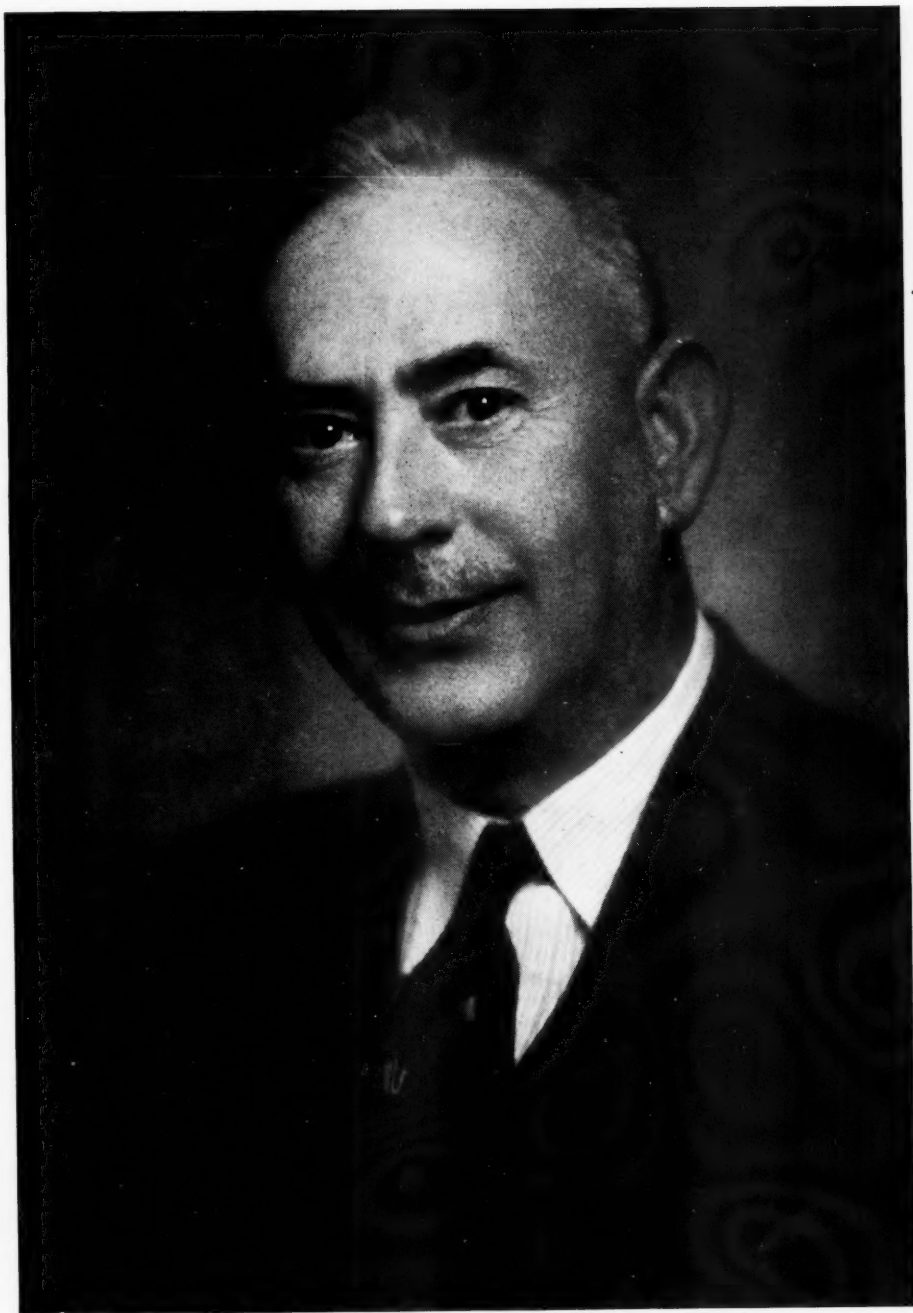
He was an interesting conversationalist and raconteur and a life-long student of politics. At the instigation of his friends he had already begun to record his reminiscences but owing to declining health had to give up the attempt almost before he had begun.

His death at a comparatively early age is a great loss to his many friends.

T. R.

*Note:* Mr. Ribbink was one of the participants in the South African Library Conference of 1928, and was elected to the Executive Committee appointed to carry out the recommendations of the Conference. He served on the Council of the S. A. Library Association from its inception until 1940. - *Ed.*





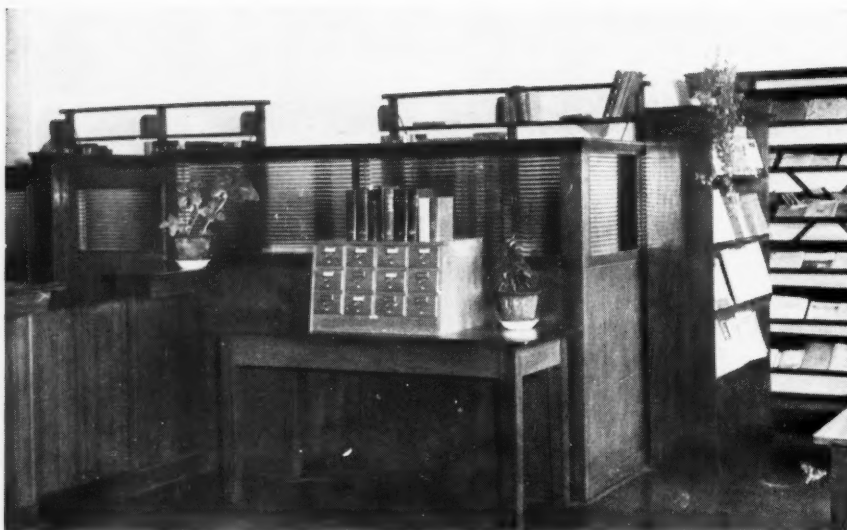
MR. PAUL RIBBINK  
*Librarian of Parliament, 1921-1949*

*J. K. de Vries*





Main Room : Part of book stocks and readers' accommodation



THE MEDICAL LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF NATAL  
Corner of issue desk, catalogue, periodicals display

# THE MEDICAL LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF NATAL

by

BEATRIX H. ROBINOW

*Assistant-in-charge, Medical Library, University of Natal*

THE MEDICAL SCHOOL of the University of Natal, in Durban, was founded in 1950-51 for the purpose of training Non-European doctors: Africans, Indians, and Coloured people. It is almost entirely financed by the Government but is administered by the University and is in every way one of the Faculties of the University.

Courses at the Medical School were started in 1951, but it was not until March 25th, 1952, that a Library was established. Dr. H. Coblans, then University Librarian, had collected together a few medical books and journals during the previous years, and for use in 1951 a few books on botany, physics, chemistry and zoology had been transferred from the University Library to the embryonic College at Wentworth, about eight miles out of Durban. These were kept in the various lecturers' rooms—where they were found (most of them) and taken to the new Library. During the War this place had been a Naval Gunners School, and like the lecture rooms, laboratories and dormitories, the Library is a converted hutment; quite solidly built and weather-proof, but with the entrance an outside door, open to the elements, where rain, wind and students enter freely.

Here the Medical Library grew and prospered for a time. As the first group of students advanced from year to year, new subjects were taught, new departments established, and new categories of books required. Perhaps most important were the new members of the academic staff appointed from time to time: measured only from a library point of view some were enthusiastic, some exasperating some indifferent—but most of them acquisitive and suffering from the scientist's neurotic temperament: a condition once considered peculiar to artists. Since the students have to study for seven years for their M.B., Ch.B. degree we shall not have the Medical School in full swing until 1957, at the end of which

year our first group of students should graduate.

In the meantime the new £400,000 building in Umbilo, in the grounds of the large King Edward VIII Hospital, was being built, and as each floor or section was complete, the appropriate department moved in. Although the building was only opened in July 1955 the Library had already moved in during the July vacation, 1954.

## *Present premises*

The main Medical Library occupies the North Wing of the third floor of the new building. Most of the stock is kept in the larger reading room which measures about 80 ft. x 36 ft. and has a mass of steel shelving on most of the floor space, with a passage along the South side and a row of North windows, tables and chairs along the other. Through a lobby where current periodicals are displayed the front reading room is reached, which is about 20 ft. x 40 ft. This room contains two special collections against the walls and further tables, chairs and lock-up desks; a row of West windows looks out on the front of the building and Umbilo Road. Provision has been made for extending the larger main room another 70 ft. in time to come.

Two small offices with desks and shelves have been partitioned off with glass and are reached through the large issue desk built near the entrance of the main room. This gives plenty of working space and shelving for the desk attendant.

The Librarian's office, about 16 ft. x 12 ft., leads off from the main room and is so situated that the librarian has a full view of the issue desk. The only other accommodation the Library has in the building at present is a small store-room on another floor, where duplicate journals are kept.

Just at the time when the Library was being moved from Wentworth to the new building,

a sum of £2,000 was presented to the University by the Directors of Barclay's Bank, to celebrate their centenary in Durban. This money was specifically given for equipment and furniture for the Medical Library. As a result it was possible to buy the curtains, tables and chairs that were needed.

The main room, especially, presented an interesting interior decoration problem. The very hygienic modern steel shelving is in office-furniture-colour, a depressing olive drab: it would have cost about £230 more to have it enamelled in the preferred cream colour. Even a room with a row of large North windows looks cold and forbidding when most of it consists of a solid bloc of such shelves. The colours of the books help, of course, but it will be some time before all these many shelves are filled. The shelves were re-arranged to some extent; pushed back and a more attractive encyclopaedia stand placed in front, and a passage opened on the one side.

The rest of the furnishing had to help in brightening the room. It was an adventure looking for curtaining – almost inevitably the right kind of material turned out to be in a smaller quantity than the required 60 yards for the one room. Eventually something suitable was found in an oatmeal background with narrow yellow and green stripes. The chairs have green seats, and the wood chosen for furniture was Sapela Mahogany, which has a light colour and attractive markings. But perhaps the plants have helped most to give the library a pleasant atmosphere: there are plants on most of the tables and in the foyer, and trailing from the top of the Current Literature and the rack for students' suitcases.

The other room was easier, and looks dignified with brocade curtains, a uniformly-bound special collection and framed colourful prints on the wall.

Only part of the Library was moved to Umbilo, however. The Wentworth College premises are still a part of the Medical School and still in use. Our students have to pass *two* pre-medical years, and as well as the usual Botany, Chemistry, Physics and Zoology they have to study subjects like History, English and Sociology. Most of these are taught at Wentworth, where the Residences also are, so that it was necessary to have a *depôt* of the Library at Wentworth; to travel to Umbilo

to change a book, since they do not otherwise go there at all, would involve a student in an expenditure of 1s. 6d. for bus fares – certainly a deterrent to reading for any impecunious student.

The Library at Wentworth still occupies the same premises although even some of the shelves were transferred. There is necessarily some duplication of reference material like dictionaries and encyclopaedias, but otherwise the books for separate subjects are kept in the two places.

### *Equipment*

The usual library standard equipment obtains – except perhaps for the large chemical wash-bottle used for watering the plants. The compact French Micro-film Reader was partly paid for from another gift, and is permanently set up in a small dark-room in Umbilo which belongs to the Department of Medicine, on the same floor as the Library. The need is urgently felt for a photostat machine or similar duplicator of material: the libraries of the University of Natal have no facilities of this kind.

### *Bookstock*

With so many research workers joining the staff, it soon became evident that as well as textbooks for the students the greatest need would be for sets of journals covering at least ten to twenty years. At no time has there been remotely enough money to buy even the books we need – medical books are notoriously expensive – and anybody who has tried to build up runs of periodicals will know how difficult it is to buy them. They are usually out of print soon after publication: during the war, with the paper shortages, small numbers only were printed in any case. When they do come on the market they are antiquarian or collector's items at appropriate prices: hundreds of pounds at a time.

But here indeed we have been able to get for love what we could not get for money, even if we had the money. Gifts have been sent to us from all over the world – Japan, Australia, Yugoslavia, France, Germany, Canada, South America and especially the United Kingdom and the United States. Our first debt of gratitude, however, is to the two Medical Libraries of the Universities of Cape Town and the

Witwatersrand, whose librarians have been our greatest benefactors. Cape Town has sent us duplicate periodical material from 1951 onwards, with perhaps the largest single consignment we have received from anywhere. Witwatersrand has not only given us what they could spare but also acts as a clearing-house for any donations from individuals in the Transvaal, even typing onerous lists of books for us. Other South African libraries have also helped; libraries such as those of Rhodes University and Fort Hare College and the Durban Municipality.

Most of the journals from overseas came as "exchanges" through UNESCO and direct. Although at first we had nothing or very little to offer we were treated most generously; the biggest donor being the Armed Forces Medical Library in Washington. It has been particularly gratifying this last month to be able to pack and dispatch four boxes of our own duplicates wanted by United States Libraries, after the years of receiving only.

Private donors have also contributed greatly to our stock; many of them giving sets of journals they had been collecting for years. Even if we sometimes had the impression that some doctor had died of old age before his heirs sent us the books he had used when he trained 'way back, there was usually some book in each collection that we could use. In this way, also, we have been collecting a small and interesting historical section. Full cycle is reached when a medical book is no longer dangerously out of date but merely quaint.

We now have about 7,000 books and bound volumes of journals. There is also a large quantity of unbound material, which, when our binding budget allows, should add at least another 1,000 volumes to the stock. Since there are over 4,000 medical periodicals in existence we realize that our collection is far from adequate; it is not even representative. We still have a very long way to go, a fact which is brought home to us every time we borrow journals from other libraries. Even so, it is comforting to find that the number of inter-library loans had dropped considerably during the last two years although the number of staff has more than doubled - when we receive a list of references these days we can find at least some in our own collection. We even lend to other libraries, although

these are mainly medical books to non-medical institutions nearby.

At last we are also subscribing to an increasing number of journals ourselves, especially with the new clinical departments being established we shall be better equipped in time to come. More than a hundred medical journals are coming in regularly now, and we have the great advantage of an arrangement with the Central Pathological Laboratory (Natal Provincial Administration) whereby we see each current number of about another hundred journals which they receive; keeping them for a month at a time. This Pathological Library was established some seven or eight years ago and the back numbers of these journals are also easily borrowed: here too we have met with friendly co-operation.

### *Staff*

The Medical Library is under the control of the University Librarian, and is run by a Medical Librarian or Assistant-in-charge. There is one African non-matriculated assistant at the Umbilo Road Library who was able to keep the Library open recently while the Medical Librarian was on leave. He is studying librarianship and will probably make a career of it.

Regular visits by the Deputy Librarian and an occasional few hours' help in filing by another member of the University Library staff all serve to keep the library going.

The Library at Wentworth is kept open for about eight hours a week through student help.

### *Hours of opening*

Hours of opening at Umbilo are officially 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on weekdays; actually the assistant is on duty until 5 p.m. each day and most Saturday mornings, and no-one is refused permission to use the library at such times.

### *Users of the library*

Users of the library are mainly the 120 students and about as many members of the staff. In practice the library is also used extensively by doctors on the staff of the near-by hospital. There is not yet an agreement with the Medical Association whereby practitioners of the two Natal branches can use the library: it would be difficult to cope with so many more borrowers



unless we had more staff. In practice any practitioner who comes to the library is helped to the best of our ability.

### *Issues*

For the first seven months of 1955, 2,516 items were issued on loan, of which 1,442 were to students, the rest being to staff and outside borrowers. This does not include inter-library loans.

### *Services*

Besides the ordinary library business and inter-library lending the Library also borrows and returns films for lecturers to show to their classes.

As far as possible the librarian tries to help with reference finding and bibliography compiling, but pressure of work is often such that we have to confine ourselves to showing people how to use the *Current List* and the *Index Medicus* and the various abstracting journals.

Microfilms are borrowed where necessary, and we put readers into touch with translators such as Russian when the occasion arises.

### *Special Collections*

Besides the small historical collection mentioned before, there are two special collections in the library:

*The Elsdon-Dew Collection:* Dr. Ronald Elsdon-Dew, pathologist and Director of an Amoebiasis Research Unit, has placed his fine collection in our custody. We have the use of some 450 bound journals and 250 books on general medicine, laboratory technique and parasitology. The volumes are kept separately in the front reading room. Also in this room is the *Florence Powell Cancer Research Library*: Mrs Powell has given sums of money to Prof. T. Gillman for his cancer research, and to date he has used a great deal of it for books and journals which are housed and used in the Library. Through this generous help we have been able to buy works like *von Möllendorff* and parts of *Henke-Lubarsch* and *Jadassohn* – a shelf-and-a-half of books which cost about £400

– and to devote £1,000 to periodical subscriptions over five years.

### *Peculiar aspects of work in this library.*

Years ago, when lecturing in Cape Town on the care and repair of books, one discussed book-worms as a kind of mediaeval monster of a certain remote historical interest. Any Durban library worker soon comes face to face with the horrid reality; the ravages inflicted by the little softbodied creature and the constant danger of bookworm infestation in new and valuable books, spreading from the ancient donations we often receive.

Constant battle is also joined against the notorious Durban cockroach, which comes in 57 varieties, all of which eat the glue in book-bindings, and spraying and trapping are part of daily library procedure.

### *Students*

After four years of work with Non-European students, what general opinion can one form about them? Are they really so keen to absorb knowledge that it is nothing but a great pleasure to make books available to them? One of the first things one learns is that it is not possible to generalise. Exactly the same types of students are met with in a different colour at any South African University: ranging from the omnivorous reader to the student who did come to the library once, in March, to look for his friend. The largest number read from page 365 to page 381 because the lecturer said so.

Because of their usual hard-up state we do have fewer fines than most libraries, and overdue books are no problem. Members of the staff keep the balance here.

Our students are probably better mannered and more polite than European students; but one must also be very careful not to cause any ill-feeling; they are super-sensitive about real or imagined "discrimination". Any disciplinary measures must be clearly taken against them as students; they so easily resent these because they feel that it is because of their colour that restrictions are imposed. In fact, however, as soon as one learns to know them as individuals the "colour" aspect disappears.

## BOOKS AND COMICS - THEIR INFLUENCE

by

S. J. KRITZINGER

THE APPOINTMENT of a Commission of Enquiry in regard to Undesirable Publications has once more raised the question whether this whole matter of so-called harmful literature is not being overdone. Some of our colleagues <sup>1</sup>, <sup>2</sup> seem to hold the view that it always remains profitable to read - whether the book is "good" or "bad", and that the influence of reading is much overrated.

One of them goes even further by saying: „Die invloed van swak of pornografiese boeke is nog meer gering as die van boeke in die algemeen, omdat hul populariteit van korte duur is.”

Librarians are capable of judging for themselves to what extent the written word has made a lasting impression on their lives. In this regard it is, however, enlightening to quote from an article <sup>3</sup> by F. Wertham, author of "Seduction of the innocent":

"The classification of mental diseases used in all civilized countries is based on the work of a famous German psychiatrist, Emil Krepelin. He was a hard-working, painstaking and utterly unsentimental scientist. A few years before his death he visited the United States to give lectures and study the research centres here. In his luggage he had only one book, a children's edition of James Fenimore Cooper. He hoped to see some of the scenes he had read about as a little boy. This episode shows you the long-lasting influence of a child's reading on a mind not given to romanticism.

"Sometimes this influence remains unconscious. I (Frederic Wertham) can illustrate this from an experience of my own. I was always interested in waterfronts and, when I travelled, I visited them. I wondered

what the fascination was, but did not give it much thought. A few years ago I came across an old childhood book of mine. Some of you will probably guess correctly that it was Dickens' "Old Curiosity Shop". I am sure I read it long before I could really understand it; but Quilp's wharf made on me a lasting impression.

"I am often asked: "What can reading do for children?" Usually it is asked defensively by people who have heard so often from "experts" that reading is only "vicarious" experience, that only so-called "real" life experiences count; that at best reading is just an adjunct in a child's life. My answer to such a question is very different. I counter with another question: "What can reading *not* do for a child?" Reading is a reflection of life. Every decent influence that you want to exert on a child is reinforced, amplified and anchored by good books. In this I include the very earliest reading of the most childish fairy tales . . . *reading is the greatest educational force that mankind has ever devised.*

"Thousands of children buy their own crime comic books, many of them spending as much as \$50 a year on just that. You don't see them smile when they read these "Comic" books either. How could they, when they read about husbands who bowl with their wives' heads, or barbecue their wives; wives who poison their husbands; men raping a girl with a red-hot poker; men and women being killed and tortured in every way mankind - even in its most cruel and degenerate periods - ever devised or imagined? In comparison with these millions of crime comic books, the number of good children's books is ridiculously insignificant. Do you know that some 75 per cent of some big publishers' children's book sales are *institutional*? That means they have not been displayed and sold to children at all, but are sold to schools and libraries.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. M. M. Stirling in his speech at the 1954 Bloemfontein Conference.

<sup>2</sup> Ehlers, D. L. "Literary censorship and the South African librarian" (*S. A. Libraries*. 22(2), 39-47, October, 1954).

<sup>3</sup> Wertham, F. "Reading for the innocent" (*Wilson Library Bulletin*. 29 (8), 610-613, April 1955).

unless we had more staff. In practice any practitioner who comes to the library is helped to the best of our ability.

### Issues

For the first seven months of 1955, 2,516 items were issued on loan, of which 1,442 were to students, the rest being to staff and outside borrowers. This does not include inter-library loans.

### Services

Besides the ordinary library business and inter-library lending the Library also borrows and returns films for lecturers to show to their classes.

As far as possible the librarian tries to help with reference finding and bibliography compiling, but pressure of work is often such that we have to confine ourselves to showing people how to use the *Current List* and the *Index Medicus* and the various abstracting journals.

Microfilms are borrowed where necessary, and we put readers into touch with translators such as Russian when the occasion arises.

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"At present American children suffer from literary avitaminosis. Many have been educated out of reading legitimate literature. The worst influences in this respect are the comic books, called "Classics illustrated", which would be better called "Classics mutilated". Once a child has read such a classics mutilated, he feels he knows the story and will not read the book. These "classics" mutilated are also sold in Europe, where they spread comic-book culture.

"I would like to leave this thought with you: *The company of bad books is often more dangerous than the company of bad people. If we protect children from the bad, they will turn to the good, as a flower turns naturally to the sun.*"

Another author<sup>1</sup> is no less convinced of the influence of books especially on children and suggests as a solution the biblical formula: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." To quote:

"It is true that millions read comics to-day, but that proves nothing except the virulence of the disease. A few generations ago smallpox was a dreaded scourge, leaving its pockmarks on all whom it touched; now a single case will send multitudes

rushing to be vaccinated. It has been virtually wiped out.

"To-day the comics have swept the nation like a plague and they too leave telltale marks. Even the comic book industry realizes the need for action and has set up a board for "self-regulation".

"What is the remedy? Is there a patent vaccine that will cause this fever to break? We believe there is - that it is books themselves that can turn the tide. *Surround the child with books, good books, from his earliest years, and he will grow up with them, drawing from them joy and fun and knowledge and amusement and adventure - and strength and character too.*

"The Bible admonishes us in Proverbs 22 : 6 : "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." The early years are very important; be sure that children have books. Then when comics come to their attention, as they inevitably will, the preventive inoculation of good books will avert the possibility of an epidemic that would bring a wide-spread blight upon reading.

"Librarians have a leading role in this drama of bringing books to boys and girls, and day after day in libraries throughout the land they are playing their parts - without much applause, it is true, but with sincerity and power."

<sup>1</sup> M. D. L. in "Talking shop" (*Wilson Library Bulletin*, 29 (8), 651, April 1955).

# PROVINSIALE BIBLIOTEEKDIENSTE, 1954

deur

D. L. EHLERS

## VERGELYKENDE STATISTIEK VIR DIE JAAR 1954

	<i>Kaap</i>	<i>O.V.S.</i>	<i>Natal</i>	<i>Transvaal</i>
Aanvang van Diens . . . . .	1951	1950	1952	1945
Aantal streke . . . . .	3	3	3	8
Aantal boekwaens . . . . .	4	3	4	10
Boekevoorraad . . . . .	203,357	205,911	167,586	614,819
Aantal Openbare Biblioteke . . . .	36	66	29	71
Aantal depots . . . . .	110	117	101	481
Sirkulasie van boeke . . . . .	503,732	919,773	909,316	2,670,029
Ledetal . . . . .	20,586	36,837	25,657	101,956
Plattelandse blanke bevolking (1951-sensus) . . . . .	684,925	192,418	110,213	467,956

### KOMMENTAAR

HOEWEL die biblioteekdiens in *Kaapland* gedurende hierdie jaar die pas gemarkeer het in afwagting van die nuwe biblioteekordonnansie, is dit tog in 'n derde streek voortgesit en ook uitgebrei na Vishoek wat 'n vry openbare biblioteek in die lewe geroep het op die grondslag van die nuwe ordonnansie. Hierdie ordonnansie, waarvan die oogmerk is om die diens min of meer op dieselfde grondslag te plaas as dié van die ander Provinsies (d.w.s. die Provinsiale Administrasie verskaf boeke en tegniese diens en die plaaslike owerhede sorg vir toereikende akkommodasie en 'n plaaslike bibliotekaris), is na beraadslagings met belanghebbende liggame opgestel en uiteindelik vroeg in 1955 deur die Provinsiale Raad aangeeem. Gedurende die jaar het 'n staatsdiensinspeksie van die diens plaasgevind met die gevolg dat groot verbeterings in die personeelvoorsiening goedgekeur is.

In *Transvaal* is die bydraes wat plaaslike owerhede aan hulle biblioteke moet betaal voordat hulle by die Provinsiale Biblioteekdiens ingeskakel kan word, gedurende die jaar van 2s. tot 3s. per kop van hulle blanke bevolking verhoog in die geval van munisipaliteite en van 1s. tot 2s. in die geval van dorpsrade en gesondheidskomitees. Hierdie verhogings

is op enkele uitsonderings na, deur die plaaslike owerhede aanvaar.

Tot dusver is dit net nog Kaapland en Natal wat *biblioteekdienste vir nie-blankes* beskikbaar gestel het, alhoewel hierdie saak ook in Transvaal oorweging geniet. Wat Kaapland betref, is die syfers van die nie-blanke diens by bogenoemde statistiek ingesluit en van die 20,586 lede was 5,476 nie-blankes. In die geval van Natal is dit nie by bogenoemde syfers ingesluit nie en daar is 6,436 boeke deur 614 nie-blanke lede uitgeneem by vier depots, terwyl sewe nuwe depots goedgekeur is vir inskakeling by die diens vroeg in 1955.

Kaapland stuur ook nog kaste met 50 boeke wat elke ses maande omgeruil word na sowat 200 blanke en 40 nie-blanke sentrums. Gegevens oor hierdie diens is ook nie by bogenoemde syfers ingesluit nie.

Die *Vrystaatse Biblioteekdiens* was verantwoordelik vir die organisering van die Staatsbiblioteek se vakansieskool op Bethlehem vanaf 25 Oktober tot 5 November wat heeltemal suksesvol verloop het. Die Diens het ook 'n sierwa gebou wat aan die optog tydens die Vrystaatse eeufeesvierings deelgeneem het. Daar is ook besluit om die diens deel te maak van die Vrystaatse Onderwysdepartement, maar daar word nog op die goedkeuring van Staatsdienskommissie gewag. Op aanbeveling

van die Adviserende Biblioteekkomitee het die Uitvoerende Komitee van die Vrystaat besluit om vir die finansiële jaar 1955-56 die som van £1,000 te skenk aan die Bloemfonteinse Openbare Biblioteek vir gebruik in verband met hulle kopiereg-afdeling.

Dis interessant om na te gaan hoeveel Engelse en Afrikaanse boeke volwassenes en kinders in die drie Provinsies wat reeds hulle hele platteland bedien, lees. In Transvaal is 1,509,913 Afrikaanse en 1,139,953 Engelse boeke uitgeneem deur 47,780 volwassenes en 54,170 kinders. Elke volwassene het gemiddeld 12.49 Afrikaanse en 15.3 Engelse boeke en elke kind gemiddeld 16.85 Afrikaanse en 7.5 Engelse boeke gedurende die jaar uitgeneem.

In die Vrystaat is 517,269 Afrikaanse en 402,504 Engelse boeke deur 20,944 volwassenes en 15,893 kinders geleen. Elke volwassene

het gemiddeld 12.5 Afrikaanse en 14.3 Engelse boeke per jaar geleen, terwyl elke kind gemiddeld 16 Afrikaanse en 6.4 Engelse boeke geleen het.

In Natal het 18,885 volwassenes en 6,772 kinders 820,873 Engelse en 79,018 Afrikaanse boeke uitgeneem. Boeke in ander tale uitgeleë, beloop 425.

Iets wat duidelik uit bostaande syfers blyk is dat, alhoewel die volwassenes op die Transvaalse en Vrystaatse platteland hoofsaaklik Afrikaanssprekend is, hulle nogtans gemiddeld meer Engelse as Afrikaanse boeke lees. Dit moet myns insiens grootliks toegeskryf word aan die feit dat die Afrikaanse literatuur beide wat gehalte en verskeidenheid betref, nog lank nie aan die behoeftes van die algemene Afrikaanssprekende leserspubliek voldoen nie.

## TO SUBSCRIBERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

*South African Libraries* is the official organ of the South African Library Association. It is sent free of charge to members whose subscriptions are fully paid-up. The Hon. Secretary's address is: S. A. Library Association, 181, East Avenue, Arcadia, Pretoria.

*Single copies* are obtainable from the Hon. Secretary, S. A. Library Association, 181, East Avenue, Arcadia, Pretoria. Price to non-members: 7s. 6d.

*Articles* not exceeding 2,500 words in length on matters relating to libraries and librarianship are invited.

*Notes and news* about library activities and developments, new buildings, library extension, publicity and so forth, will be welcomed.

*Newspaper cuttings* should be clearly marked with the name and date of the source.

*Contributions* which have appeared elsewhere should be marked accordingly, with an indi-

cation that permission to reprint has been granted.

*The Association* accepts no responsibility for opinions expressed in the Journal by its contributors.

*Copy* should reach the Editor at least two months before the month of publication, viz., 1 May for the July number, 1 August for the October number, 1 November for the January number, and 1 February for the April number.

*Contributors* are asked to note that manuscripts should be typed in double spacing with ample margins, and preferably on one side of quarto paper (10 inches by 8). Manuscripts should be carefully revised before being submitted, as corrections in type are expensive.

*Books and publications* of library interest, including annual reports and booklists, are welcomed for review purposes. After being reviewed, they are added to the Association's professional library at Box 397, Pretoria.

## THE LIBRARY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE RESEARCH WORKER

by

R. ELSDON-DEW, M.D., F.R.S. S.Af.,

*Honorary Director, Amoebiasis  
Research Unit, Durban<sup>1</sup>*

THE AVERAGE research worker is much happier looking down his microscope or twiddling with test-tubes than he is reading other people's work or writing about his own. By far the majority of scientists are inarticulate; a fact only too obvious in reading their papers. Nevertheless, their ideas must be disseminated – in part for the benefit of other workers in the same field and, to a lesser extent, for the edification of the general public. The whole purpose of writing about one's work is to let others know our findings and ideas in the hope that these may click with some other mind and have their repercussions.

The new science of cybernetics is coming into its own and it is to be hoped that more efficient methods of communication between worker and worker will soon be devised. Our present method is, to say the least, very clumsy. Publications at the moment must be rather likened to "spraying DDT over acres of land in the hope of hitting one tsetse fly". Not only do we spread our DDT over acres of land, but different workers spray different acres of land – still aiming at the same tsetse fly.

There are thousands of journals dealing with scientific publication and there are probably hundreds of thousands of workers. Each journal reaches a different section of the scientific public and it is but seldom possible for any worker to cover a single field, however restricted this field may be. The information he seeks is usually distributed over a horde of journals and even the abstracting journals with their teams of workers cannot cover one quarter of the published literature.

<sup>1</sup> The Amoebiasis Research Unit is under the sponsorship of the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, of the Natal Provincial Administration, and of the University of Natal.

Journals are published under various conditions. There are those which aim to cover a particular field – more power to them – but there are others which cover such a wide range of subjects that it becomes almost impossible to find the relevant material. Worse still are those journals which one might call parochial; whose main public is confined to a particular area. Let us consider the fate of a scientific article published in each of these three categories. In the first it is conceivable that ten *per cent* of the readers will be interested in that particular article, in the second there might be two *per cent* and in the third if one quarter *per cent* are interested it is a very good paper. So there is an enormous amount of paper, print, and time used to convey a little information to even fewer people.

Let us look at it from a slightly different angle. Let us say that a worker is interested in Amoebiasis. He is then interested each year in some 400 out of the hundred thousand medical articles written each year but, nevertheless, he has to cover a very much higher proportion of these in order to obtain his one-half *per cent*.

In all this one might say *cui bono*? It must do somebody some good otherwise it would not be done and, frankly, my own opinion is that the only person who really gains from this mass presentation of the literature is the advertiser who fundamentally pays for the journal. You can be sure that it pays him, otherwise his shareholders would have something to say. When we think, however, of the mass of paper and print which fills our shelves and which is not referred to from one year's end to another it must be obvious that the whole process is completely inefficient.

The inefficiency does not stop there. There



is a distinct inefficiency in the editorial department – in the acceptance of papers for publication which really have little more than a parochial interest. Particular offenders in this respect are case-reports. These are very often reported at full length – the only thing that I have seen omitted is the fact that the patient sneezed at twenty past eleven on the fourth day! All this detail is certainly of no interest to the general reader and of very little interest even to the specific reader. The worker who needed the information could well write to the author for such fine detail.

This is only one of the forms of verbosity – a verbosity which might well be excused when delivered to small, but when delivered to large, audiences, has but little to recommend it. Do you realize that one set of the *J.A.M.A.* occupies several lines of shelves of this room?<sup>1</sup> This is but one aspect of which editors might well take notice, but editors – poor men! – are subject to many pressures and it would indeed be a brave man who told some world-leading authority that his most recent delivery was merely the “rantings of a decrepit old man”. He must publish and unfortunately many of the readers of that paper will be content to sit at the feet of the master and accept these self-same rantings as indisputable gospel.

This terrific mass of material completely disguises the solitary grains of wheat which may prove of value. There is no royal road to finding these grains of wheat. The abstracting journals do help and considerably, but they cannot cover more than a small section. It is only by surveying these abstracting journals, the journals most likely to cover the points in question and by following one reference from another that anything like complete coverage can be obtained. This following of one reference from another may not always be satisfactory because even if the reference does prove correct it may not give the information hoped for. The first article may only give Smith's impression of what Jones meant to say and the point in the original article may have been taken out entirely from its context.

A further complication and one only too familiar to librarians is the inadequacy of titles. A title should give a fair indication as

to what is contained in the article, but by the nature of things this cannot always be done. The article may well deal with the general subject and have some gem of information on our specific project in a few lines of text. On the other hand it may not have those gems. How then is the scientific worker to classify such an article? Does he perforce have to read all the articles on all the general subjects which may contain the information he requires?

A textbook on medicine may well have a very good article on Amoebiasis, but as a general rule does not contain anything worth abstracting. In such a textbook we are almost certain to find something on Amoebiasis, but what is the case when the article is entitled “Diarrhoea in Infants in China”? This article we must read entirely to see whether there is anything on Amoebiasis. The title gives us merely the plainest of truths and a clue which, though we cannot afford to ignore it, often leads to a useless expenditure of time and trouble.

Here is the problem, a problem which I must say is all too frequently ignored by the scientific worker. He is overwhelmed and therefore does not attempt to do anything about it. The result is that he may make observations which have appeared frequently in the literature before, and worse still, he may repeat some lengthy experiment which some other worker has done and shown to be of no value. Certainly the second worker has gained experience, but of what use is literature if it is not to allow us to gain our knowledge from the experience of others?

Now may I give you something of my personal approach. As I mentioned, the average number of articles on Amoebiasis is something of the order of 400 per annum and these are distributed over a large variety of journals in various languages and often hidden away as theses. These articles are picked up “as and how”. A certain proportion are found directly by reading those journals most likely to contain them, such as the journals of tropical medicine and on parasitology. Others again I pick up from abstracting services such as the *Tropical Diseases Bulletin*, the *Quarterly Cumulative Index Medicus*, the *Current List and Biological Abstracts*, etc. Some are picked up in sequence from other articles – that is to say that when we receive an article we check to see that all the references we consider relevant already appear in our files, and if not they are sought

<sup>1</sup> This paper was originally given at the Medical Library, University of Natal, Durban, to a meeting of the Natal Branch, on 1 June, 1955.

out. Finally, quite a number of workers send us reprints automatically.

This of course means that we have a mass of information in various stages of completion. For some we have been able to make our own abstract or use the author's summary from the original article. For others we only have the abstract given by some journal, and for others again we merely have the titles. All these are entered on punched cards—a system without which we would be entirely lost. Abstracting is in itself a big problem and were it not for the use of a dictaphone and the early hours of the morning it would be out of the question. These cards are used as a record of our further actions. In the first place if we know the authors we send a request for reprints—a process often very much criticised but, nevertheless, necessary. For a large number we make use of existing library services and in particular the microfilm and photostat services provided by the United States Army Medical Library, who have probably the biggest coverage of all. We have found that for theses, the microfilm service provided by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research is often able to locate these better than does the Army Medical Library, possibly because of the use of international liaison.

When it is complete our card has our own or the author's summary together with such summaries as have appeared in abstracting journals. This means that all the articles have been read and that several different points of view may be entered in our notes on that particular paper. This is where the edge punching comes in. You will appreciate that these articles have an enormous amount of extremely varied information on them and classification is of course essential. A short description of the card may be of value and some talk on the pitfalls which we have found over the years. It must be remembered that a system such as this depends very much on its initial design and that it is not always possible to anticipate future developments.

There are many types of punched card. We all know of the enormous machines which can handle such material at the rate of thousands per minute. Most of these have the punched holes in the body of the card and as we really wish to have information readily available on the card, the edge-punch system is better. We do not need to sort our information at

terrific speed and we certainly cannot afford the machines. The sum total of the machinery required for using my particular choice is a tram-conductor's punch on the one hand and a knitting needle, a hairpin or even an opened paper-clip, on the other.

Clipping of such cards may be done in several different ways and this depends to a large extent on the nature of the information and what one wishes to do with it. It is possible to devise a numerical system with an enormous number of different categories, but such a system means a complicated intermediate coding which ultimately detracts from its use. For certain purposes it is of course essential. At the other end it may be possible to use one hole for one piece of information—therefore at this end one would be restricted to having the same number of pieces of information as there are holes on the card. This might prove adequate for some things, but it is not for my system. Therefore I have had to use what one might call a progressive system—that is to say where the position of one hole determines the meaning of a second or possibly of a third hole.

On the left-hand side of my card provision is made for major divisions as regards subject because I do not only read parasitology, though this is clipped No. 1 on the card. Also on the left-hand side provision is made for alphabetical classification of the cards by author's name. This does not require, as one might think, 26 punched holes; we only use five because the combination and permutations of five holes gives a complete alphabet. These five holes are labelled A, B, C, D, E. The letter E is clipped for the initial letter of any author's name in the last half of the alphabet. Each of these halves is divided into a half, the latter half being clipped with D and so progressively down the single letters. This system is used because it provides rapid sorting for return of cards to their positions. This sorting process is opposed to the finding process which is the purpose of later sections. The subject classification of course determines the significance of the remainder of the holes. On the top for Parasitology I use a zoological classification of parasites on the progressive system which I referred to before. The first clip determines the genus concerned and the clips which follow it are the subdivision thereof.

One must remember here that it is the first clip that counts because the later clips may clash with the first. This is not by any means always convenient, but has the advantage of being space-saving. An example may be quoted when Clip A refers to the Rhizopoda – that is to say the amoebae – Clip B immediately following this, as an initial clip, refers to the Mastigophora and if a card is clipped AB it means that the card refers to the Rhizopoda, subdivision B of A, and the card is therefore on *Entamoeba histolytica*. There are certain main clips used to indicate articles covering genera.

The right-hand margin is utilized on a single punch system for the main scope of the article. It is necessary here to use a single punch because articles regularly fall into more than one scope. The bottom of the card is used for further divisions of these and also to cover such things as anatomical sites, the nature of experimental work and subdivisions of therapies.

We can find articles on specific subdivisions of the subject with relative ease, but without the punching system these would readily be lost in our filing cabinets.

Reading the articles as they appear means that there is no continuity. At one moment one is reading an article on the distribution of parasites in China, the next moment on the treatment of some rare complication, the next moment on the chemical constituents of some favourable media, and so on, and this makes for a confused state of mind. So we find it necessary to summarise the literature from time to time – the object being to correlate all the various papers on the subject. We have in the past done this year by year as and when collection of cards for a particular year is reasonably complete. This is a major work, as it not infrequently implies going back to the original articles to elucidate some point not absolutely clear in our carded summary. This summary of literature we publish in roneoed form, for though it is done in the first

place for our own benefit, it seemed likely to be useful to other workers who have not had the facilities for searching the literature that we have. This summary of the literature has proved very popular elsewhere and is in part responsible for the numbers of reprints we receive from all parts of the world.

So much then for our system. Finally, however, I do want to say something about literature in general and to revert to a certain extent to my opening remarks. I hope I have been able to give you some reminder of the problems that confront the research worker to-day. The enormous amount of futile reading he has to do coupled with the difficulty he has in finding the relatively little information he requires is something which well merits the attention of world organizations. When we think of the many man hours spent on this ineffective pursuit and realize that we should be thinking in terms of scientist minutes, then the need for action becomes all the more necessary.

You will note I have said nothing here of the unit of librarian sweat which must also be taken into consideration. One could parody the famous saying by saying :

*Always is so much written by so many about so little.*

It would not be so bad if it was merely written, but the modern printing press has used this mass of ink to hide and disguise the valuable bits. Perhaps in the future, there may be some central clearing house of information to which all scientists will submit a brief summary of their work. In this clearing house there will be a codification of all material together with a codification of those scientists interested, whereupon the writer and the reader could be put into direct contact one with the other without this massive, expensive and time-consuming mass we are pleased to call literature.

## ROUND THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES

### *A review of some Annual Reports*

THE REPORT of the *G. A. Fichardt Public Library, Bloemfontein* for 1953-54 indicates a further rise in membership and decrease in number of books borrowed and a further year of staff difficulties, with fourteen changes in a full-time staff of fifteen. With a new North wing under construction (the first stage of a long-desired rebuilding scheme) but not yet ready for occupation, and increased pressure on the existing accommodation, the Library has been living through a difficult transitional phase, and the maintenance of its normal services and extension work under these conditions is a considerable achievement. Non-European library developments included the opening of the first library service in the Orange Free State intended specifically for Coloured readers, at Heatherdale.

Some concern is expressed in the Report that the work of the National Drama Library, which was initiated in Bloemfontein, will be affected by the development of drama libraries within the four Provincial Services. "We are faced with what is virtually a gradual decentralization of drama services, and instead of one National centre there will be five, all trying to carry out the same task and none of them equipped or stocked to give a really first-class service". A plea is made for the building-up of one first-class service from Central Government funds.

The Report of the *Cape Town City Library Service* for the year 1954 records the rapid and rewarding results of placing upon the Municipality the major responsibility for initiating City-wide free library services. In 1952, when the present City Librarian, Mr. B. G. Hood, was appointed, the City Council made small grants to a number of suburban libraries, a larger grant to the Cape Libraries Extension Association, and a grant-in-aid to the South African Public Library, a State-aided institution which had for many years served as the Central Lending Library for the City. In the 2½ years between his appointment and the end of the period covered by this Report, Mr. Hood has built up a strong headquarters organization, and a total staff

comprising 46 professional assistants and 52 others (i.e., including staff members taken into the Service from the old suburban libraries). Twelve of these libraries were incorporated as branches or sub-branches of the Service during the year, and their stocks completely reorganized and replenished. Arrangements were made with the South African Public Library to lease its former Lending Room for a period of five years, as a "Central branch", pending the provision of a new Central Library building in the City.

An account of the development of the Service will be found elsewhere in this number of *South African Libraries*.<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps sufficient to record here that the bookstocks, which have had to be built up "from scratch", numbered 201,872 at the end of 1954; the public was being served from 34 service points, including two mobile libraries and seven hospital libraries; the issues of the twelve suburban libraries increased from 707,309 to 998,443 during the year, with a total issue through the Service of more than a million volumes. The expenditure of library services in the City has risen steeply from £16,329 in 1952 (which included grants to the suburban libraries) to £66,791 in 1954, of which approximately half was received in the form of a subsidy from the Provincial Administration. Membership increased from an estimated 8,256 for the suburban libraries at the end of 1953, to 27,491 at the end of 1954.

Among the activities of the Service during 1954 were the building-up of Children's Library services through existing and new service-points, the development of a busy Request Service, and the refurbishing of some of the suburban library buildings which have been inherited by Mr. Hood and his staff. Extension services to the Coloured housing estates and the African township at Langa were further developed.

Although the situation at the end of the year is described as one of 'rapidly expanding normality', after a feverish period of transition,

<sup>1</sup> Hood, B. G. The City Library Service, Cape Town (*S.A.L.*, 23(2), 32-40, October, 1955).



the library situation in Cape Town has in effect been transformed in the short period of three years, and tribute is paid by the Town Clerk in this Report to the enthusiasm and ability of the City Librarian and his staff which have made this result possible.

The encouraging progress made in Cape Town has been due in part to the provision made in the Provincial Library Ordinance for the subsidization of approved library services in the large urban areas of the Cape. Of these, only Cape Town has so far taken advantage of this provision. At *East London* (European population, 44,441) the report of the Public Library for 1954 records a further decrease in membership, in spite of physical improvements to the Library; and an increase in the subscription rate. With the pending expansion of the Provincial Library Services, the future of this comparatively old-established Library is obviously bound up with the readiness of the local authority to meet its responsibilities; the present municipal grant amounts to £250 p.a., a shockingly inadequate figure for a City that prides itself on progressive policies in other directions.

The 1953-54 report from *Germiston* (Carnegie) Public Library (European population, 50,200) reflects the despondent mood that preceded the establishment of the Library as a municipal department. At that time ten members of the staff of eleven had resigned during the year, the accommodation had become chronically inadequate, and the funds at the Committee's disposal, including a municipal grant of £8,000, were totally insufficient for the Library's needs. The report for 1954-55, which is not yet to hand, should show substantial improvements in the circumstances of this Library, which was a pioneer in public library development on the Rand.

The year's work at the *Johannesburg* Public Library (European population, est. 354,300) is recorded in a report as full as ever of substantial, if unspectacular, achievement. Commenting on the fact that year-to-year progress often seems slow, the City Librarian recalls that since the Municipality of Johannesburg took over the existing subscription library in 1924 the number of borrowers has grown from 4,200 to 93,876; the annual circulation of books borrowed from 289,328 to 2,243,477; and the bookstock from 64,000 to 605,097. Even in a city of phenomenal growth and a

period of rapid economic expansion these figures are impressive, although they do not indicate the increase in the quality of service that has also taken place.

Handicapped by its present inability to establish more branches in the rapidly growing suburban areas (there are only six branches so far) the Library has tended to concentrate its development on the Central Library, which now has the strongest Reference Collection of any Public Library in the country. Included in this is the Music Library, to which nearly 5,000 items were added during the year when the scores of the disbanded City Orchestra were incorporated. Mention is made in this report of the increasing reliance on bibliographical aids and tools, and of the need for specialized staff in this department of library work.

Perhaps the most notable single acquisition of the year was the collection of 433 seventeenth century water-colours of Cape plants and animals, *Icones plantarum animalum*, which have been added to the Strange Collection of Africana.

In a note on the disposal of duplicate items, the report records that 6,695 items were despatched to other institutions during the year through direct exchange arrangements, or through the British National Book Centre and the United States Book Exchange. 3,030 items were received in exchange.

An increase of 100,324 is recorded in the number of books borrowed from the European libraries. Commenting on the relatively small increase in the borrowing of books in Afrikaans, the report suggests that 'more could be read if more suitable books were published. The demand exists and the door is wide open for competent Afrikaans writers'; a conclusion amply borne out in other library services in South Africa.

The Johannesburg report includes, as usual, very full and informative statistical information, and records an expenditure during 1953-54 of £147,000, excluding loan charges.

Like *East London*, *Kimberley* (European population, 21,055) has a Public Library still administered on a subscription basis, and not yet directly affected by the expanding Cape Provincial Library Service. In the report for 1954 an increase in subscribing members is recorded, and also in the number of books borrowed. The Children's Library was

renovated and its bookstock improved, two new stations were operated at Ulco and Ganspan, and the municipal grant was increased to £500 – double that of East London, which has a considerably larger population.

The Report of the *Krugersdorp* Public Library for 1953–54, which embodies a concise history of the Library, records a membership of 10,834 members, of whom 7,344 are described as 'students'; nearly half the books issued during the year (totalling 284,725) were borrowed by children. This total figure includes 'Reference issues' amounting to 64,227. The proposed mobile library service had not yet materialized, and branch services continued at West Krugersdorp and Lewisham, the former in new premises. Increased use of the Reference facilities of the Library is recorded.

At Pietermaritzburg, the *Natal Society's Library* enjoyed an active year, with increases in membership and number of books circulated, and structural alterations involving the re-organization of the Lending Department. The cost of these was met partly from the proceeds of a 'Petticoat Lane fête' organized by the Library staff. The financial resources of this century-old library have considerably improved during the past two years, and some of the innovations in Reference and Children's library work were described in *S.A. Libraries*, v. 22, p. 62–65, October, 1954. Extension activities continued during the year under review.

The fact that the South African Library Association is holding its Annual Conference at *Port Elizabeth* this year for the first time, will no doubt give impetus to the movement to place the Public Library there on a similar footing to the City Library Service in Cape Town. If this is not done, as the report for 1954 makes clear, the public of Port Elizabeth will find themselves being called upon to pay towards the cost of free library services established throughout the Province without receiving any special support for their own library services. At present the Library receives a municipal grant of £1,000 and a Provincial grant of £540, the rest of the revenue being derived from rent of offices and subscriptions. Port Elizabeth had in 1951 a European population

of 76,680, a figure that has increased considerably with the rapid industrial and commercial growth of the City. It is clear that although the Library does provide good reference services for the central City area, there is considerable scope for their expansion, and for the provision of branch services in the growing peripheral areas. These can best be met by the Municipality's requesting the City to be declared an urban library area, and so matching their expenditure with a 50 per cent subsidy from the Province. The onus for action clearly rests with the City Council.

The report of the *State Library, Pretoria*, for the year ended 31st December, 1953 (the latest available at the time of writing) records that new building extensions to cost £75,000 are planned, to accommodate the National Lending Department, Union Catalogue and other departments at present housed in difficult circumstances. The total book circulation of all departments – including the Reference department – reached 598,539, of which 16,894 comprised books issued through inter-library loan. Further progress was made with the organization of the Smithsonian Collection of United States Government publications, including the compilation of select bibliographies in specific fields covered by the Collection. The Union Catalogue entries, excluding the State Library's own catalogues, totalled approximately 300,000 at the end of the year under review. The children's library again proved to be popular, the annual circulation reaching the figure of 101,898. Mention is made of the need for branch library provision, which is at present entirely lacking, despite the rapid growth of the City during the past ten years.

Lastly, a steady year of development is recorded from the Public Library at *Vereeniging* (European population, 19,087). During 1953–54 the library membership increased to 5,899 or one-third of the town population, and the book issue to 224,045. Plans for a mobile library were proposed but deferred; branch libraries are now being planned instead. As in previous years, encouraging use was made of the children's library and solid development is recorded at the Sharpeville Library for African readers.

## BIBLIOTHÈQUE A LA BOUILLABAISSÉ

by

O. H. SPOHR

To PUT all kinds of sea-food into the same kettle is a well-known procedure round the Mediterranean. I know a librarian who calls every photographic reproduction a photostat; I know another one who when he hears the word film puts all 16 mm. or 35 mm. sound or silent microfilm into one category, and I know yet another who shudders at the mention of any technical gadget.

Following the practice of my more learned friends in the library profession I have cooked up another soup which, I am afraid, will be far less tasty and amusing than the original dish from Marseilles, and will be also much less revolutionary than the tune that was named after that town. My Bouillabaisse will contain odd notes and news about the various kinds of material which often now tend to upset our well established routines and keep on disturbing our tranquil library life.

SOURCES OF 16MM. FILMS IN  
SOUTH AFRICA

For many libraries in South Africa the showing of 16mm. films has become an integral part of their activities and we feel that a list of some of the better known documentary film libraries might be useful.

1. Shell Film Library, P. O. Box 2231, Cape Town.

The Shell Film Unit, one of the pioneers of documentary film production recently celebrated its 21st birthday. The Shell Company of South Africa produced an interesting booklet for this occasion and, at the same time, the Shell Film Library produced a new illustrated catalogue of all documentary and educational sound films that they lend free of charge to recognized operators of first class projection equipment. Incidentally, all film libraries make this condition, as films are an expensive item and if not handled carefully great damage might result.

Free copies of the catalogue and booklet can be obtained from the address above. Shell Film Unit films are also available through the offices of the Shell Company in all the principal towns in South Africa.

2. The Office of the Canadian Government Trade Commissioner, P.O. Box 683, Cape Town, issued a 1955 supplement to its film catalogue. It contains some 50 new films which come from the National Film Board of Canada. Most of these films are of a very high standard, and bring us a vivid picture of Canada's scientific activities, how the Canadians live, how they sing and dance.

3. Films from Britain, No. 5. A catalogue issued by the film library of the United Kingdom Information Office, London House, Loveday Street, Johannesburg. Here again a great number of films, some of them with commentary in Afrikaans, bring the British Isles nearer to us. They also have a number of fine films on Colonies in Africa.

4. The Office of the High Commissioner for Australia, Regis House, Cape Town, during the parliamentary session, and Central House, Pretorius Street, Pretoria, otherwise. Maintains a small film library on all walks and ways of life in this vast continent. They also issue a mimeographed catalogue.

5. Film Services of the Department of Education, Arts and Science, P.O. Box 1146, Pretoria, and P.O. Box 4251, Cape Town, have by far the largest film libraries in the country. Its main catalogue was issued in 1951, a substantial supplement came out in 1953, and members of the library are kept up-to-date by *Film Service News* which comes out frequently. The Union Education Department does not only have 16mm. films, but also a large collection of 35mm. stripfilms, and in addition there is a very fine record library. The April, 1955, *Film Service News* gives a

list of some Shakespeare recordings and also lists recorded broadcasts to schools where a number of subjects are recorded in the form of lessons.

6. The offices of many of the representatives of foreign countries have, from time to time, films on their countries. Usually these films are only in South Africa for a limited period and it is advisable to keep in touch with the various Legations and Consulates so as to learn when new films arrive.

At the lunch hour shows of the University of Cape Town we have recently shown films from Czechoslovakia, Egypt, France, Germany, Holland and Sweden.

7. The list would not be complete without mentioning the collections of the various Film Societies in South Africa, of which there is one in nearly every large centre. They normally specialize in collecting copies of what have become known as "classical" films.

8. Various industrial and commercial enterprises have started film libraries as a means of advertising and publicity, and General Motors, P.O. Box 1137, Port Elizabeth, produced a small catalogue of their holdings. Reckitt & Colman, P.O. Box 1097, Cape Town, have a large number of medical films, and there are many more firms holding films on special subjects.

We hope to bring out a complete list of all film libraries in the course of this year.

N.B. In the above notes the rental film libraries in South Africa have been omitted, and will be mentioned in a later issue.

#### 16MM. FILM NEWS FROM OVERSEAS

##### *United States*

I have just received the 1955-56 sales and rental catalogue of the Center for Mass Communication of Columbia University Press. C.M.C. is a non-profit production centre for educational television and radio programmes, films, recordings, comic books, pamphlets, posters and other materials in the "mass media",

generally produced under sponsorship of voluntary agencies, government agencies, business firms.

The catalogue lists several hundred films, either for sale or for hire, and a great number of interesting recordings on subjects like Public Health, Social Problems, Diseases.

##### *United Kingdom*

On my table is the Spring, 1955, number of the *University Film Journal* issued by the British Universities Film Council. This Council has already listed some 800 films which are listed on a card index catalogue, which can be purchased by non-members at one penny per card. Further information can be obtained from the B.U.F.C. Catalogue Secretary, Royal Technical College, Glasgow, C.1.

The Journal appears three times a year and costs 5s. Subscriptions should be addressed to C. J. Duncan, Hon. Treasurer, B.U.F.C., Dept. of Photography, Medical School, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1. For anyone interested in more serious films this appears to be a most valuable serial.

Other useful British film news is contained in *Sight and Sound*, published by the British Film Institute and a very important periodical on audio-visual education is *Look and Listen* which from now on will appear twelve times a year, but the subscription will remain at £1 a year. Circulation Offices, 62 Doughty Street, London, W.C.1.

It reports currently on filmstrips, new projectors, wall charts and now concerns itself with TV as well.

#### MICROFILM POCKET READERS

##### *Mikrolettera*

This claims to be the first pocket size microfilm reader. It is manufactured in Germany by Pohl & Co., Schwaebisch Gmuend, and is listed at DM 85, approximately £8. According to a small illustrated leaflet on hand it claims that it enlarges up to 20 times single microfilm frames of 16 and 35mm. film. It takes roll film and filmstrips. It can also be used for microcards and microfiche (microcards on film) up to 4.3 to 7.1 inches. The miniature reader works without any light source and can



be used indoors or outdoors. It is so small that it can be carried in one's pocket.

#### *Microskaner*

The UNESCO *Bulletin for Libraries* in the July 1955 number mentions an American pocket microfilm reader. According to the description it is not quite so versatile as the German one and apparently needs a set of pen light batteries. It claims to be so small as to be carried like a pen in one's pocket, and with it one can read all sizes of positive or negative microfilm and microprint. With the "Microskaner" the material can be read in daylight or with ordinary room illumination with both eyes open. It is priced at 12 dollars 95 cents.

#### MICROFILMING ABROAD AND IN SOUTH AFRICA

##### *France*

*The Courrier de la Normalisation*, edited by l'Association Française de Normalisation, 23, rue Notre-Dame-des-Victoires, Paris (2e) devotes its March-April 1955 number exclusively to microcopying, with a great number of articles and several hundred illustrations; nearly every field of microfilming has been covered.

##### *Germany*

The Central Catalogue of Northwest Germany, situated at the University Library of Cologne, reports that they have recently made a great advance. Originally there were no financial means to use photography, and the main catalogue had to be copied by hand, but last year by means of microfilm the remaining 110,000 titles were microfilmed and copied on to 5 x 3 cards, and in this way the first half of the alphabet A to J of all the participating libraries has been completed, and some of the library holdings are recorded up to the letter S. The Central Catalogue does not only operate for Germany, but also for the international loan service between Germany and England.

##### *South Africa*

At the time of writing the History Department of Rhodes University, Grahamstown, is having some 40 volumes of Eastern Province and Cape Town papers of the 1840's and 1850's

put on to microfilm. They are taken from originals contained in the South African Public Library. When the project for Rhodes has been completed, the South African Public Library will have the same volumes on a master negative film from which positive copies will be available, probably by the end of the year. A complete list and the cost of these positive copies will be compiled in due course and can be obtained on application to the Chief Librarian, South African Public Library, Cape Town.

#### INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTA- TION

The December, 1954, number of the *Review of Documentation* brings, for the first time, a bibliography of documentation in co-operation with the *Journal of Documentation*; they amalgamate their own reviews with the abstracts which appeared in the *Journal* and by this means it is hoped to enlarge the scope of the "Bibliographia" and so increase its usefulness to readers. Over 500 abstracts are listed in this particular number. The abstract is usually given in French or German, or one is referred to the English abstract in the *Journal of Documentation*. Originals in the English language, of course, are abstracted in English.

Professor Dr. E. Pietsch in the *Nachrichten für Dokumentation*, No. 1, March 1955, has compiled a most comprehensive report on national documentation activities in 27 countries. The article is followed by a brief list of sources. The Union of South Africa is well represented in this report, following details submitted by Miss H. Mews, Principal Information Officer, Library and Information Division, S.A.C.S.I.R.

#### VERIFAX AND AGFA COPYRAPID

Early next year Kodak will be introducing into this country a new method of making rapid inexpensive copies by a semi-photographic process called Verifax.

I understand from the local representatives that a machine taking 8½" x 13" originals will be available and is likely to cost between £150 and £200. This process works on similar lines to the already available Agfa Copyrapid process. Various firms in South

Africa import the mechanical equipment needed for the Agfa Copyrapid process. To mention only two of them, Mathieson & Ashley, and Ozalid South Africa Ltd. Both firms have offices or agents in the principal towns of South Africa.

It appears that if only one copy is required the Agfa process will be somewhat cheaper; when more copies are needed the Kodak process will work out less expensive. With the Verifax, however, only a limited number

of prints can be made. The Agfa process when combined with a Diazoe process allows for an unlimited number of copies.

#### NEW PHOTOGRAPHIC SERVICE POINT IN PRETORIA

The State Library in Pretoria has recently installed a Copy Rapid unit and photo-copies will be available at a reasonable price from now on.

### EVANS LEWIN

(1876 - 1955)

THE DEATH occurred in London, on 25 July 1955, of Mr. Percy Evans Lewin, at one time Assistant Librarian at Port Elizabeth, and Librarian to the Royal Empire Society (formerly the Royal Colonial Institute) from 1910 till 1946. Born in Boston, Lincolnshire, Mr. Lewin served in the Woolwich Public Libraries from 1901 to 1903, and then came to Port Elizabeth for a period of four years, during which he compiled the printed Catalogue of the Library, including its unusually good collection of Africana. His knowledge of South African bibliography stood him in good stead when, after a short period in South Australia, he was appointed to succeed Mr. J. R. Boosé as Librarian of the then Royal Colonial Institute. At about this time he was closely associated with Sidney Mendelssohn in London, and collaborated in the production of Mendelssohn's well-known Catalogue, working particularly on the Government publications section.<sup>1</sup>

During his thirty-six years' librarianship at the Royal Empire Society Mr. Lewin succeeded in building up one of the best specialized libraries in London, dealing with many aspects of colonial and Commonwealth development; he also built up a reputation as an outstanding bibliographer in his field. In 1930 he persuaded the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Rhodes

Trustees to provide the essential financing of the printed *Subject Catalogue of the Royal Empire Society Library*, of which four volumes were published (1930-37). The fifth, comprising biographical collections, was planned, but did not appear; and in 1940 when Mr. Lewin was on the point of retirement, the Library which was largely his own creation was severely damaged in the blitz. With characteristic courage and resilience Mr. Lewin set to work to make good the losses, which included an extensive law library, and when he finally retired at the age of 70, much of the damage had been repaired.

During the first World War Mr. Lewin was attached to the Admiralty Intelligence Division, and wrote several books and reports on African and Dominion affairs. Apart from his knowledge of Commonwealth affairs, which was both wide and deep, Mr. Lewin had catholic interests, including numismatics, archaeology and genealogy. He also wrote under the pseudonym of Justinian Mallett, publishing in collaboration with Mary L. Pendered a study of Olivia Wilmot Serres, "so-called princess of Cumberland".<sup>2</sup>

Many South Africans will remember Mr. Lewin as a genial and resourceful host and those who had the privilege of working under him will regret the passing of a sympathetic and inspiring chief.

<sup>1</sup> Lewin, Evans. The Mendelssohn Library and bibliography (*Africana notes and news*, 3(4), 101-07, Sept. 1946).

<sup>2</sup> Pendered, M. L. and Justinian Mallett. *Princess or pretender?* London, Hurst & Blackett, 1939.

## New Books

<b>Snakes :</b> <i>Mainly South African.</i> DR. WALTER ROSE . . . . .	18/-
<b>The Way Out :</b> UYS KRIGE . . . . .	10/6
<b>Boot and Saddle :</b> P. J. YOUNG. <i>The Story of Cape Mounted Riflemen</i> . .	12/6
<b>This Dark Bright Land :</b> V. M. FITZROY . . . . .	19/-
<b>As die Son Ondergaan :</b> S. V. PETERSEN . . . . .	7/6
<b>Die Uile van Wonderkloof :</b> S. SWANEPOEL . . . . .	9/6

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